

Agrippa II

Agrippa II is the first comprehensive biography of the last descendant of Herod the Great to rule as a client king of Rome. Agrippa was the last king to assume responsibility for the management of the Temple in Jerusalem, and he ultimately saw its destruction in the Judaeen-Roman War.

This study documents his life from a childhood spent at the Imperial court in Rome and rise to the position of client king of Rome under Claudius and Nero. It examines his role in the War during which he sided with Rome, and offers fresh insights into his failure to intervene to prevent the destruction of Jerusalem and its Sanctuary, as well as reviewing Agrippa's encounter with nascent Christianity through his famous interview with the apostle Paul. Also addressed is the vexed question of the obscurity into which Agrippa II has fallen, in sharp contrast with his sister Berenice, whose intimate relationship with Titus, the heir to the Roman throne, has fired the imagination of writers through the ages. This study also includes appendices surveying the coins issued in the name of Agrippa II and the inscriptions from his reign.

This volume will appeal to anyone studying Judaeen-Roman relations and the Judaeen-Roman War, as well as those working more broadly on Roman client kingship, and Rome's eastern provinces. It covers topics that continue to attract general interest as well as stirring current scholarly debate.

David M. Jacobson is a Visiting Research Fellow in the Department of Classics at King's College London, UK, where he also gained his PhD for a thesis entitled *The Place of Herod's Temple in the Architecture of the Augustan Age*. He has published extensively on the history, art, architecture and numismatics of Judaea in the Hellenistic and early Roman Imperial periods, including *The Hellenistic Paintings of Marisa* (2007), *Distant Views of the Holy Land* (with Felicity Copping) and *Antioch and Jerusalem: the Seleucids and Maccabees in Coins* (both in 2015).

David F. Graf is Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Miami, Florida, specialising in the history and archeology of the Graeco-Roman Near East. He is the Director of the Hellenistic Petra Project and Member of the Institute of Advanced Study in Princeton. He has published 150 scholarly articles, is co-editor of the *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992), and author of *Rome and Its Arabian Frontier from the Nabataeans to the Saracens* (1997).

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AGRIPPA II

THE LAST OF THE HERODS

David M. Jacobson



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Agrippa II

The Last of the Herods

David M. Jacobson
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by David F. Graf

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**To the fond memory of my late father, Solly Jacobson, who
instilled in me a boundless curiosity.**

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RPC 2, no. 2092. Private collection, with permission

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Coins of Agrippa II

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with permission

*This is the only coin issued with the name of Claudia, Nero's
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Auctions, Inc.

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3Jerusalem in the 1st century CE; courtesy of Prof. Shimon Gibson

Preface

This accessible and concise biography is the first monograph solely devoted to Agrippa II, the last monarch of Judaea. Herod the Great has long been the sole subject of books. Over the past two decades alone, there have been several monographs about the King of Judaea and his buildings, including those by Peter Richardson (1996), Duane Roller (1998), Sarah Japp (2000), Ehud Netzer (2006), Tamar Landau (2006), Aryeh Kasher (2007), Samuel Rocca (2008), Christian-Georges Schwentzel (2011), Bieke Mahieu (2012) and Geza Vermes (2014). The Herodian dynasty as a whole has been carefully examined by Nikos Kokkinos (2010). Herod Antipas has been the subject of biographies by Harold Hoehner (1980) and Morten Hørning Jensen (2006). Agrippa I has been studied in a book by Daniel Schwartz (1990). Even Agrippa II's sister Berenice was already in the 17th century the heroine of a play by Racine, simply titled *Berenice*, and there has been a biography by Émile Mireaux (1951) as well as popular histories (Ruth Jordan 1974; Sabino Perea Yébenes 2000). By contrast, the last King of Judaea has been curiously neglected. This is remarkable given that he appears in both the writings of Josephus and the Acts of the Apostles, in the latter case as interrogator – with Berenice – of the apostle Paul in Caesarea (25.1–12).

Almost all the information that survives about Agrippa is contained in the writings of the ancient Jewish historian, Josephus Flavius (37–c. 100 CE). The two men were contemporaries and became close acquaintances. In Josephus' autobiographical account, we learn that he even sent Agrippa a taster of his major work on the Judaeian revolt against Rome, the *Bellum Judaicum* (c. 75 CE). Josephus includes Agrippa's positive endorsements of his 'book' (*Vita* 364), after which he sent Agrippa the remainder (367). The presentation of the king here then is something the king himself would have read, and – perhaps for this reason – there is a certain restraint. His career is covered sketchily and erratically. The one episode where the king is made the positive centre of attention is his address to the population of Jerusalem, urging them not to rebel (*BJ* 2.344–407).

As Martin Goodman (2017) has observed, it is in *Antiquitates*,

written some 20 years after *Bellum*, that we learn vital information about Agrippa's role in regard to the Temple and Judean governance in the decades before the revolt, and the portrayal here is not entirely positive. We find that Claudius, in 48 CE, had given Agrippa the care of the Temple and its treasury, previously held by his uncle (and brother-in-law) Herod of Chalcis and, before that, his father Agrippa I (AJ 20.222). This gave Agrippa the right to appoint High Priests, a right he exercised liberally. There was clearly unpleasantness. Agrippa had occupied a Hasmonean palace with an upper-story dining room purportedly affording a view of the Temple's sacrificial rituals: the priests built a wall to block the view (AJ 20.189–90). Josephus was also not happy about the innovations Agrippa made in terms of upgrading the Levites' clothing and requiring them to sing songs referring to him (AJ 20.217). In the revolt itself, Agrippa sided firmly with the Romans. Given what Josephus both says and does not say, the key question remains as to whether Agrippa might have been able to prevent hostilities and the subsequent destruction of the Temple. This is one of the questions addressed by the present study.

A small amount of supplementary detail relating to the reign of Agrippa can be culled from Roman historical sources, including Tacitus and Cassius Dio, as well as from archaeological remains, such as those of the king's palace at Caesarea Paneas (Banias). Inscriptions and coins that may throw some light on Agrippa's kingship are examined in two valuable appendices. This study therefore reaches to material evidence as well as historical sources for evidence. It is high time such a study was written, and David Jacobson's meticulous presentation – designed for the general reader as much as the scholar – will undoubtedly be used by many in years to come.

Joan E. Taylor
King's College London, UK

Note: all ancient inscriptions reproduced in this volume are rendered in English translation to make them accessible to a wide readership. References to publications where the same inscriptions may be found in their original language (Greek, Saffaitic, etc.) are always provided alongside.

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In writing this account, I have benefited from the support and advice of close family, friends and colleagues and I want to especially thank my son Michael, my collaborator David Graf (the author of [Appendix 2](#) on inscriptions relating to the reign of Agrippa II), as well as Joan Taylor, Nikos Kokkinos and David Hendin for their generous feedback and advice. Maurice Sartre graciously provided us with privileged access to essential material covering the inscriptions from the Ḥaurān (Auranitis), which he is to publish shortly with Annie Sartre-Fauriat as *IGLS 16*, for which David Graf and I are duly grateful. I also wish to thank all those organisations and individuals who have furnished me with illustrations and permission to use them freely in this publication, in particular, David Hendin and Jean-Philippe Fontanille.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of works of Josephus

AJ	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>
Ap.	<i>Contra Apionem</i>
BJ	<i>De bello Judaico</i>
V	<i>Vita</i>

Abbreviations of collections of inscriptions

Note: the sigla editions of Safaitic inscriptions may be found in Al-Jallad 2015, pp. xiii–xvii. To view the complete record of a Safaitic inscription on the OCIANA database including its sigla, search http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/corpus/pages/OCIANA_xxxxxxx.html, where xxxxxxx is the seven-digit OCIANA number (including zeros) referring to each inscription.

AAES 3

Publications of the American Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1899–1900: 3. Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Syria (ed. W. K. Prentice; Leiden, 1910).

AE

L'Année épigraphique (Paris, 1888–)

CIIP

Corpus Inscriptionum Judaea/ Palaestinae, (ed. H. M. Cotton et al.; Berlin/New York, 2010–)

CIL

Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (Berlin, 1853–)

CIS

Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum (Paris, 1881–)

CPJ

Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum 2: BC 14–AD 200 (ed. V. A.

Tcherikover and A. Fuks; Cambridge, MA, 1960).

IG

Inscriptiones Graecae (included in the online database of Searchable Greek Inscriptions at <https://epigraphy.packhum.org/>).

IGLBibbia

Iscrizioni greche e latine per lo studia della Bibbia, (L. Boffo; Brescia, 1994).

IGLS 5

Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie: 5. Émésène (ed. L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde and C. Mondésert; Paris, 1959).

IGLS 6

Ditto: 6. Baalbek et Beqa' (ed. J.-P. Rey-Coquais; Paris, 1967).

IGLS 14

Ditto: 14. La Batanée et le Jawlan Oriental (ed. A. Sartre-Fauriat and M. Sartre; Beirut 2016).

IGLS 15

Ditto: 15: Le plateau du Trachôn et ses bordures (ed. A. Sartre-Fauriat and M. Sartre; Beirut, 2014).

IGLS 16

Ditto: 16. Le Djebel Druze (ed. A. Sartre-Fauriat and M. Sartre; in preparation).

IGUR

Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae (ed. L. Moretti; Rome, 1968–1979).

ILS

Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae, 3 vols. (ed. H. Dessau; Berlin, 1892–1916).

IGR

Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes (ed. R. Cagnat et al.; Paris, 1906–1928).

ISyrie

Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie: recueillies et expliquées (ed. W. H. Waddington; Paris, 1870).

MAMA 8

Monumenta Asiae Minoris antiqua.; 8. *Monuments from Lycaonia, the Pisido-Phrygian borderland, Aphrodisias* (ed. W. M. Calder and J. M. R. Cormack, Manchester, 1962).

OCIANA

Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia at <http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/webd#ociana> (Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford).

OGIS

Oriens Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae, 2 vols. (ed. W. Dittenberger; Leipzig, 1903–1905)

PAES 3A

Syria. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions in Syria, Section A: Southern Syria (ed. E. Littmann, D. Magie and D. R. Stuart; Leiden, 1907).

PAES 4A

Ditto, Division IV: Semitic Inscriptions, Section A: Nabataean Inscriptions from the Southern Haurân (ed. E. Littmann; Leiden, 1914).

PME

Prosopographia Militarium Equestrum (ed. H. Devijver; Leuven, 1976–1993).

RES

Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique, 8 vols. (ed. C. Clermont-Ganneau et al.; Paris, 1900–1968).

RMD 1

Roman Military Diplomas 1, (ed. M. M. Roxan; London, 1978).

SEG

Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum (ed. A. W. Sijthoff et al.; Leiden, 1923–).

Abbreviations of other publications

No one compilation of journal abbreviations comprehensively covers all those used in this book, mainly because its subject matter spans several disciplines. In this bibliography, priority is given to the abbreviations advised for the *American Journal of Archaeology* (www.ajaonline.org/submissions/journals-series). If a publication is not included in that list, the next port of call is the abbreviation list in *L'Année philologique*. However, if the journal is not covered by either of those two compilations, then the abbreviation may be found in the list provided for the *Journal of Biblical Textual Criticism* (rosetta.reltech.org/TC/TC-abbrev.html). All remaining journal titles are given in full.

ANRW

Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt (ed. H. Temporini and W. Haase, Berlin/New York, 1972–)

CNS

Corpus Nummorum Siculorum: La Monetazione di Bronzo, 3 vols. (R. Calciati; Milano, 1983–1987).

CRAI

LIMC

Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (Zürich/München/Düsseldorf, 1981–).

LTUR

Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae, 6 vols. (ed. E. M. Steinby; Rome, 1993–2000).

NEAEHL 1–4

The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, 4 vols., Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society (ed. E. Stern et al.; Jerusalem/New York, 1993).

NEAEHL 5

The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, Supplementary Volume (ed. E. Stern, H. Geva and A. Paris, Jerusalem/Washington, DC, 2008).

PAES 2

Syria. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909, Division II: Ancient Architecture in Syria, Section A: Southern Syria (H. C. Butler et al.; Leiden, 1907).

RIC 1²

The Roman Imperial Coinage 1: From 31 BC to AD 69, 2nd edn. (ed. C. H. V. Sutherland and R. A. G. Carson, London, 1984).

RIC 2.1²

The Roman Imperial Coinage 2.1: From AD 69 to AD 96, Vespasian to Domitian, 2nd edn. (I. A. Carradice and T. V. Buttrey, London, 2007).

RPC 1

Roman Provincial Coinage, Vol. I (in 2 parts): From the Death of Caesar to the Death of Vitellius (44 BC – AD 69) (A. Burnett, M. Amandry and P. Ripollès; London/Paris, 1992).

RPC 2

Roman Provincial Coinage, Vol. II (in 2 parts): From Vespasian to Domitian (AD 69–96). (A. Burnett, M. Amandry and I. A. Carradice; London/Paris, 1999).

RRC

Roman Republican Coinage, 2 vols. (M. H. Crawford; Cambridge, 1974).

SC 2

Seleucid Coins, A Comprehensive Catalogue, Part II (in 2 vols.): Seleucus IV through Antiochus XIII (A. Houghton, C. Lorber and O. Hoover; New York / Lancaster, PA, 2008).

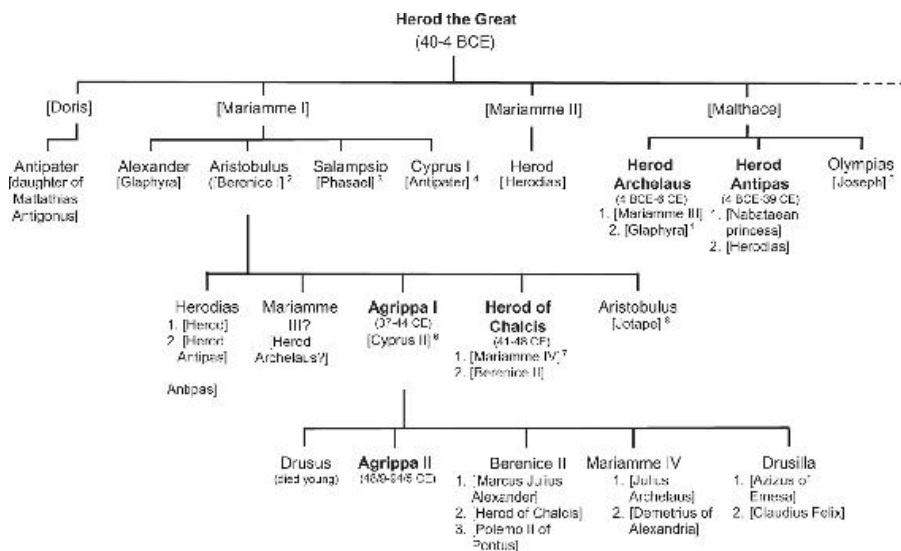
TJC

A Treasury of Jewish Coins from the Persian Period to Bar Kokhba (Y. Meshorer; Nyack, NY/Jerusalem, 2001).

Key dates

- ~~37 BCE~~ of Herod the Great and division of his kingdom between three sons – Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas and Philip.
- ~~6 CE~~ Archelaus, Ethnarch of Judaea, deposed by Augustus; Judaea placed under direct Roman rule, administered by a Prefect reporting to the governor of Syria.
- ~~14~~ Death of Emperor Augustus and accession of Tiberius.
- ~~26~~ Pontius Pilate appointed Prefect of Judaea.
- ~~37/38~~ of Agrippa II.
- ~~36/37~~ of Philip the Tetrarch; his territory administered by the governor of Syria.
- ~~37~~ Death of Tiberius and accession of Gaius Caligula. Replacement of Pontius Pilate by Marcellus and then Marullus. Agrippa I awarded Philip the Tetrarch's former kingdom by Caligula.
- ~~39~~ Herod Antipas deprived of his tetrarchy by Caligula.
- ~~40~~ Agrippa I dissuades Gaius Caligula from his plan to erect a statue of himself in the Temple of Jerusalem.
- ~~41~~ Assassination of Gaius Caligula and accession of Claudius, with the help of Agrippa I, who is appointed King of Judaea by the new Emperor; his brother, Herod, is awarded the small kingdom of Chalcis.
- ~~44~~ Death of Agrippa I; Judaea reverts to Roman rule and Cuspius Fadus appointed governor (Procurator).
- ~~46/47-48/49~~ Alexander, nephew of Philo the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, serves as governor of Judaea. He is succeeded by Ventidius Cumanus.
- ~~48/49~~ of Herod of Chalcis and award by Rome of his kingdom to Agrippa II.
- ~~52/53~~ Cumanus succeeded by Claudius (or Antonius) Felix. During Felix's tenure as governor of Judaea, he marries Drusilla, the youngest sister of Agrippa II.
- ~~54~~ Claudius exchanges territories of Agrippa II, with Chalcis swapped for the former tetrarchy of Philip and the tetrarchy of Lysanias (Abilene).
- ~~54-55~~ Agrippa II contributes an auxiliary force to the Roman army in a

- military campaign against Parthia. Death of Claudius and succession by Nero as Roman Emperor. Agrippa is awarded western Galilee and southern Peraea.
- 58** Claudius (or Antonius) Felix is replaced by Porcius Festus. He is welcomed by Agrippa II at Caesarea Maritima. Agrippa interviews the apostle Paul in detention. Dispute between Agrippa II and the Jewish leadership over his roof-top dining room overlooking the Temple in Jerusalem.
- 60** Lucius Albinus succeeds Porcius Festus as governor. Agrippa II intervenes in a dispute between the Levites and the Sanhedrin in the matter of their ceremonial garb.
- 61** Major building work on the Jerusalem Temple completed. Agrippa II engages workers, who had been laid off, to pave streets in the city.
- 62/64** Flavius Florus succeeds Lucceius Albinus, amidst growing dissension in Judaea.
- Spring 66** Outbreak of violence between the 'Syrians' and Jews of Caesarea Maritima. Berenice, the eldest sister of Agrippa II, witnesses atrocities committed by Florus' soldiers on the local population, while in Jerusalem fulfilling Nazirite vows.
- Agrippa II dies 66** Agrippa II unsuccessfully remonstrates with the inhabitants of Jerusalem to desist from insurrection. He gives his wholehearted support to Rome in the Judaeo-Roman War, which then commences.
- Expedition of 66** Roman army under Cestius Gallus, governor of Syria, to Judaea and its ignominious failure.
- Early 67** Flavius Agrippa put in charge of Roman operations in Judaea by Nero.
- October 67** Agrippa's campaign in Galilee and Agrippa's kingdom completed with the fall of Gamala.
- 68** Vespasian reduces Peraea, Idumaea and most of Judaea. Violent death of Nero (June). Outbreak of an empire-wide civil war.
- 69** 'Year of the Four Emperors', concludes with the proclamation of Vespasian in Rome and ending of the civil war.
- 70** Titus completes siege of Jerusalem, with the destruction of the Temple (August) and the fall of the Upper City (September).
- July 71** Death of Vespasian and Titus celebrated in Rome.
- 73/74** Conclusion of the Judaeo-Roman War with the fall of Masada.
- 75** Reconciliation of Agrippa II and Berenice in Rome. Berenice cohabits with Titus. Agrippa awarded the *ornamenta praetoria* for his services to Rome and possibly received the principality of Arca at this time.
- 75-79** Agrippa II completing the *Bellum Judaicum*, Josephus corresponds with Agrippa II, who reads and approves his account of the War.
- Death of Vespasian and succession of Titus, who dismisses Berenice.**
- 94/95** Death of Agrippa II.

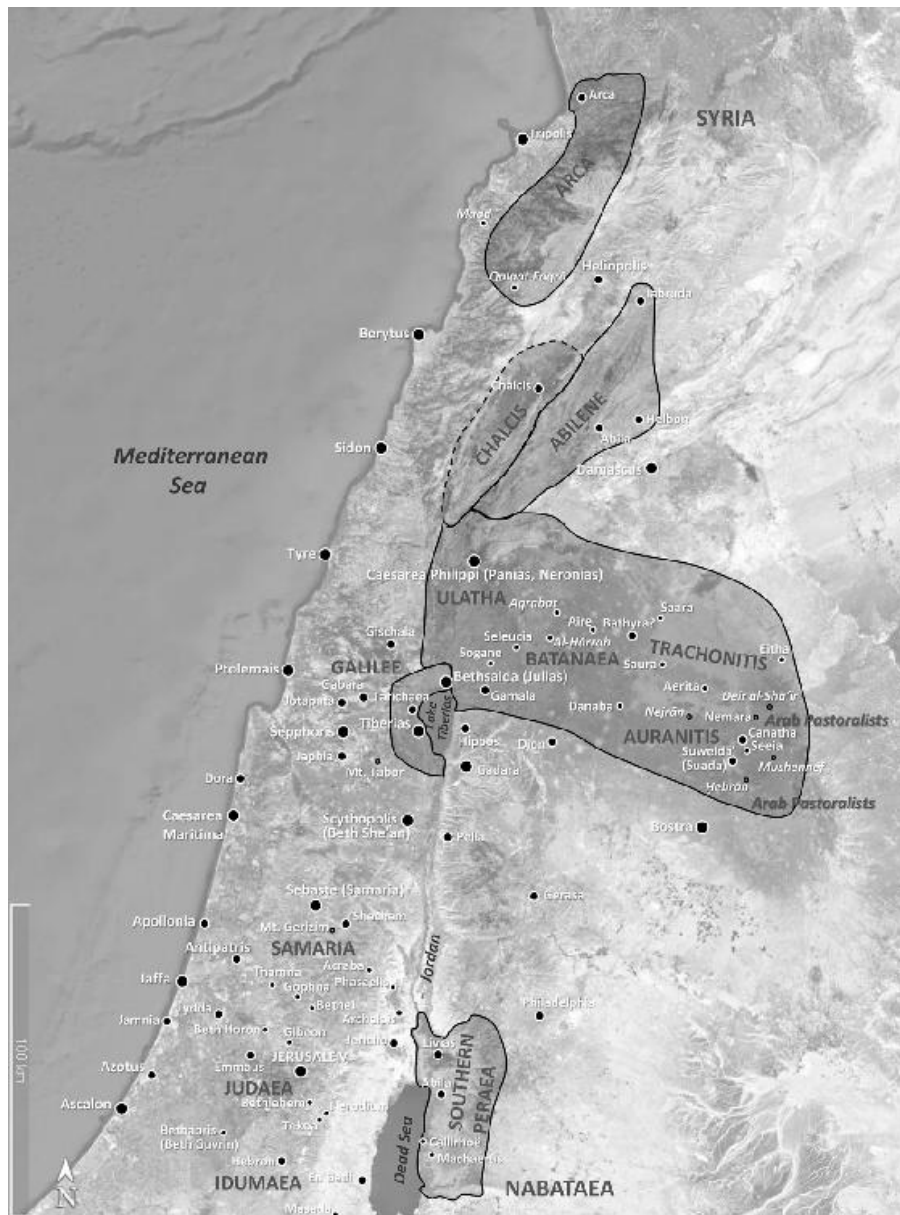


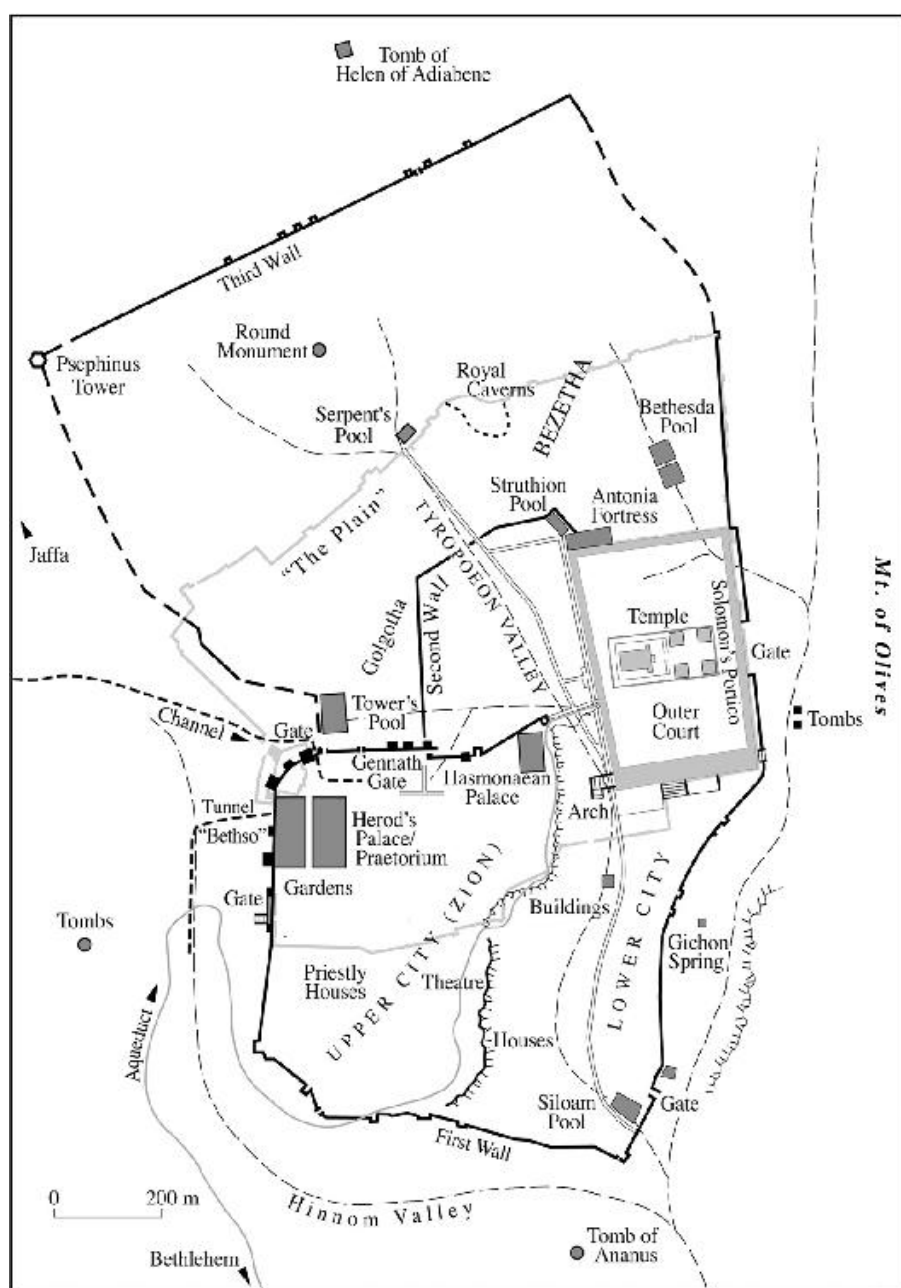
<i>Note no.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>Name in Kokkinos 1998</i>
1	Glaphyra	Daughter of Archelaus I Philopatris, King of Cappadocia	Glaphyra
2	Berenice I	Daughter of Salome, Herod the Great's sister, and Costobar	Berenice I
3	Phasael	Son of Herod the Great's elder brother of the same name	Phasael II
4	Antipater	Son of Salome, Herod the Great's sister, and Costobar, an Idumaeen kinsman and associate of Herod	Antipater III
5	Joseph	Son of Herod the Great's middle brother of the same name	Joseph III
6	Cyprus II	Daughter of Salampsio and Phasael	Cyprus III
7	Mariamme IV	Daughter of Olympias and Joseph	Mariamme V
8	Jotape	Daughter of Sampsigramus II of Emesa	Jotape I (IV)

Stemma chart – explanatory notes

This simplified stemma only includes the offspring of Agrippa II's direct forebears. The names of Herodian monarchs are shown in bold together with the years that they held a royal title (not necessarily their declared regnal years). Spouses are named in italics, within square brackets.







Map 1 The kingdom of Agrippa I.

Map 2 The kingdom of Agrippa II.

Map 3 Jerusalem in the 1st century CE; courtesy of Prof. Shimon Gibson.

1 Introduction

Agrippa II was both the last descendent of Herod the Great and nominally Jewish ruler to hold royal office. The momentous Judaeo-Roman War, often referred to as the First Jewish Revolt of 66–73/74 CE, cut across the middle of his reign.¹ He was inevitably sucked into that conflict, which left its mark on the remainder of his reign. Agrippa's path crossed that of the apostle Paul and he was well acquainted with the famous Jewish historian, Josephus, who wrote about the king, so it is all the more surprising, then, that Agrippa II has such a low profile in history.

Among his few distinctions, Agrippa was the last monarch to assume responsibility for oversight of the Temple in Jerusalem, following a long succession of royal patrons going back, according to tradition, to the illustrious King Solomon, who reputedly built the first Sanctuary in the Israelite capital. Yet, from the vantage point of Jewish history, Agrippa II is generally considered as a renegade to his nation, who slavishly supported the Romans against his own kinsmen in the Judaeo-Roman War with hardly a sigh of regret. It is tempting to ask whether he could have acted more assertively to avert this catastrophe or at least have intervened at some point to try to save Jerusalem and the Temple from destruction. No less pertinent is whether he possessed the requisite skills to have a chance of success, should he have made the attempt. Besides, how would the capricious Nero or the hard-headed Vespasian have responded to an intervention from a vassal ruler implying criticism of imperial policy? Agrippa's stance during the War is all the more surprising considering his earlier patronage of Jewish interests and institutions. Josephus is silent about Agrippa's role in the Roman military campaign; it is a matter that warrants an explanation. After the War, Agrippa appears to have totally detached himself from the Jewish people and their fate, and that rupture also needs to be examined and explained.

In 75 CE, well after the end of the War, Agrippa came to Rome with his sister, Berenice, who continued a passionate affair with the Flavian heir apparent, Titus. This liaison caused outrage in Roman aristocratic circles and has fired the creative imagination of writers ever since.²

Agrippa was a negligible figure among the *dramatis personae* of that affair and was mostly forgotten afterwards. Thereafter, he fades from historical records and the circumstances and date of his death are obscure. Agrippa also presents us with other puzzles, for example, why did the Romans not appoint him client king of Judaea after the War, particularly in view of his loyal service and unstinting support? Another mystery relates to his personal life, namely why did this highly eligible Herodian heir never marry and produce offspring? There is also the often-repeated question as to why Titus suddenly dismissed Berenice once he became emperor.

This biographical study of Agrippa II endeavours to address all these questions and others surrounding his life and times. It reconstructs his social and political context. His childhood was dominated by the short, but meteoric career of his more colourful father, Agrippa I, who had grown up in the imperial household and had been instrumental in the succession of Claudius to his unstable nephew, Gaius Caligula, as Roman Emperor. After the sudden death of Agrippa I in 44 CE, Claudius was dissuaded by his advisors from appointing Agrippa junior as his late father's successor to rule Judaea. After biding his time in Rome, where he championed Jewish causes, the younger Agrippa was given his first imperial assignment during the closing years of the reign of Claudius with the award of the principality of Chalcis in Mount Lebanon and royal title (in 49 CE). This was followed by the grant of further parcels of territory in 53 CE. The accession of Nero in 54 CE led to territorial acquisitions by Agrippa around Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee) and southern Peraea on the east side of the Jordan valley, to help secure for Rome the trans-Jordanian flank facing Nabataea.

Around 60 CE, Agrippa and Berenice were taken by the newly appointed Roman governor, Porcius Festus to visit the apostle Paul, who had been detained in Caesarea Maritima having been charged for causing a rumpus in Jerusalem. The questioning of Paul by the king, which is recorded in detail in Acts of the Apostles (25.23–26.32), reminds us that Agrippa was a witness of the nascent period of Christianity. It would be intriguing to ascertain whether other founding members of this movement were known to him and one wonders about the extent of his knowledge about what was to grow into a major world religion, but we are never likely to find out.

Agrippa gained the custodianship of the Temple in Jerusalem on the death of his uncle, Herod of Chalcis,³ and exercised his authority to appoint and dismiss High Priests. We know rather little about Agrippa's religious outlook, knowledge of Semitic languages, tastes and intellectual pursuits. Josephus is somewhat economic about Agrippa's relationships, including with members of his extended

family. In his adulthood, one relative sat on the throne of Armenia from 58 to 63 CE as Tigranes VI,⁴ while the latter's son, Alexander, who was married to a Commagenean princess,⁵ was appointed client ruler of Cilicia Trachaea in c. 75 CE. A closer cousin, Aristobulus, the son of Herod of Chalcis by his first wife Mariamme,⁶ was appointed client king of Armenia Minor and ruled there from 54 to c. 93 CE. However, with the exception of his uncle, Herod of Chalcis, we are in the dark about the contact that these Roman clients of the Herodian line had with Agrippa.⁷

During the Judaean-Roman War, which impinged his own kingdom, he operated in tandem with other Roman vassals, including Antiochus IV of Commagene,⁸ in contributing and leading auxiliary forces in support of the Roman campaign in Judaea (*BJ* 2.500; 3.8, 64–69; Tac., *Hist.* 5.1). From Josephus, we learn that Agrippa cultivated close links with the wealthy Alexandrian Jewish family to which the philosopher, Philo belonged (*BJ* 2.309; *AJ* 19.277). We also know that Agrippa maintained ties with various client kings, offering his sisters Berenice and Drusilla to some of them in marriage. Drusilla was promised to Epiphanes, son of Antiochus IV of Commagene,⁹ and when he backed out of the betrothal, to Azizus of Emesa.¹⁰ After the death of that husband, Berenice was given in marriage to Polemo II of Pontus and Cilicia Trachaea.¹¹ The practice of linking the client monarchies through marriage was encouraged by Rome as part of its *clientela* policy.¹²

For our knowledge of Agrippa II, we are crucially reliant on Josephus, so we shall begin this enquiry with an assessment of that historian as a source of reliable information on this last Herodian king. The particulars that Josephus recorded are, of course, selective, being chosen to suit his rhetorical and apologetic purposes, in particular assigning blame for the War on Jewish extremists. As already pointed out, there are vital aspects that he does not mention, studiously omitting any mention of Agrippa in connection with any of the atrocities perpetrated by the Romans and their allies, presumably not wishing to hurt the reputation of Agrippa, who was one of his major patrons.

This study proceeds to chronicle the life of Agrippa II and examines his involvement in various episodes, analysing his response to crises and other challenges that confronted him. Many of these situations can be properly understood when viewed against the backdrop of the world in which he lived, so that wider events and external constraints on his choices are taken into account. The obscurity of the final two decades of Agrippa's reign is peripherally illuminated by surviving artefacts (coins, inscriptions) and building remains. Among these artefacts, Agrippa's prolific coinage and inscriptions which relate in

some way to his rule provide valuable supplementary evidence for his ideological outlook and, to a lesser extent, on the social and economic fabric of his kingdom. This important material is examined in two appendices.

The date of extinction of Agrippa II's kingdom, probably occasioned by his death, is not clearly disclosed by any near-contemporaneous text but there is numismatic evidence for identifying his final year, which is presented here.

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- 1 For the ongoing debate on the suitability of the translation of the Greek term *Ioudaios* as either 'Jew' or 'Judaean', see Schwartz 2013, 161 n. 117.
 - 2 So far, attempts at biographical accounts of Berenice are tarnished by fictional liberties, as exemplified by Perea Yébenes 2000, Jordan 1974 and Mireaux 1951.
 - 3 For a biographical sketch of Herod of Chalcis, see, Schürer 1973, 571–72.
 - 4 Tigranes VI and his short and troubled reign in Armenia are discussed in Kovacs 2008, 343–46; Kokkinos 1998, 248–50, 310–12.
 - 5 Alexander's consort, Jotape, was the daughter of Antiochus IV of Commagene, who had been a close friend of Agrippa I, attending a short-lived conclave of client kings organised by Agrippa I in Tiberias (*AJ* 19.338–42). On Alexander, the son of Tigranes VI, see Kokkinos 1998, 250–54.
 - 6 This Aristobulus married another member of the Herodian dynasty, Salome, possibly a daughter of Herod Antipas, notorious in the New Testament as the 'dancer' who asked for the head of John the Baptist (Mark 6.21–28; Matt. 14.6–11); see Kokkinos 1998, 232. The couple had three sons, called Herod, Agrippa and Aristobulus (*AJ* 18.137). For a short biography of Aristobulus, the son of Herod of Chalcis, see Kokkinos 1998, 309–313.
 - 7 There are coin portraits of Herod of Chalcis, Aristobulus of Armenia Minor, his spouse Salome and Tigranes VI. Herod of Chalcis: *RPC* 1, nos. 4778–80; Aristobulus of Armenia Minor: *RPC* 1, nos. 3839–40; *RPC* 2, no. 1692; Tigranes VI: Kovacs 2008, nos. 12–17.
 - 8 For coin portraits of Antiochus IV of Commagene, see *RPC* 1, nos. 3701, 3703–10, 3712, 3717–22, 3852, 3854–57, 3859. On the history of the client kingdom of Commagene and its monarchy, see Kropp 2013b, 23–24; Sullivan 1977b; for Antiochus IV of Commagene (38–72 CE), see *idem*, 785–94.
 - 9 *AJ* 20.139–40 (Drusilla's betrothal to Epiphanes); *AJ* 20.139, 141, 158 (her brief marriage to Azizus). Epiphanes is represented together with his younger brother, Callinicus, on coins of Commagene; see *RPC* 1, nos. 3860–61, 3866–67.
 - 10 On Azizus of Emesa (c. 50–54/55 CE), see Sullivan 1977c, 215–16; Kropp 2013b, 24–26.
 - 11 *AJ* 20.139–40. For coin portraits of Polemo II, see *RPC* 1, nos. 3813–15, 3821–38 and probably *idem*, nos. 3735–39. An account of Polemo II (c. 38–c. 68 CE) is given in Sullivan 1980b, 925–30.
 - 12 See, for example, Jacobson 2001, 23–24, with references.

2 The reliability of Josephus as a historical source for Agrippa II

For a biographical portrait of Agrippa II, Josephus is by far the most important documentary source, with a few more crumbs of information supplied by Suetonius, Tacitus, Cassius Dio, Aurelius Victor, Juvenal and the Book of Acts. It is important, therefore, to consider the reliability of Josephus as our fount of knowledge on the king.

Our dependence on Josephus in this context is not so much as a historian, but is more narrowly focussed on his reliability as a commentator of contemporaneous events.¹³ The two men were close contemporaries, there only being about ten years between them in age, Josephus being the younger of the two.¹⁴ Therefore, it is the quality of Josephus as a reporter, particularly of the War and the personalities familiar to him, rather than his reliability as a historian of earlier times that needs to be gauged.¹⁵

In the preface to the *Jewish War* (*Bellum Judaicum* in Latin), or more correctly the *Jewish War against the Romans* (BJ 1.1), Josephus declares his intention to provide a balanced account of the conflict that he experienced first-hand and present a factual record, thereby correcting the bias of earlier accounts and criticising other historians or chroniclers writing about that conflict:

... others, who witnessed the events, have either from flattery of the Romans or from hatred of the Jews, misrepresented the facts, their writings exhibiting alternatively invective and encomium, but nowhere historical accuracy.

(BJ 1.2)

Although writers presume to give their works the title of histories, yet throughout them, apart from the utter lack of sound information, they seem, in my opinion, to miss their own mark. They desire to represent the Romans as a great nation, and yet they continually deprecate and disparage the actions of the Jews.

(BJ 1.7)

By contrast, Josephus claims that, in writing the *Bellum*, he had made good the shortcomings and distortions in the accounts of the War by Roman writers:

For having known by [personal] experience the war which we Jews waged against the Romans, the incidents in its course and its issue, I was constrained to narrate it in detail in order to refute those who in their writings were doing outrage to the truth.

(AJ 1.4)

He declares that his aim was to present an objective account of those event to the subjects of the Roman Empire, ‘where veracity and laborious collection of the facts are essential’ (BJ 1.16; cf. BJ 1.3). He saw it as his duty to faithfully recount the actions of both sides in the conflict, but admits that his own account could not be free from his own subjectivity:

I have no intention of rivalling those who extol the Roman power by exaggerating the deeds of my compatriots. I shall faithfully recount the actions of both combatants; but in my reflections on the events I cannot conceal my private sentiments.

(BJ 1.9)

Josephus reminds us that the *Bellum* was composed with polemical and apologetic goals in mind, to deflect criticisms of Graeco-Roman readers of the Jewish nation while justifying the Roman response to the conflict and his own conduct to a Jewish audience.¹⁶ Josephus squarely pins much of the blame for his country’s misfortunes on the leaders of the rebel factions which, according to him, held the Jewish population hostage. He expresses his loathing of those irresponsible leaders and their acolytes and heartfelt grief for the disaster that had befallen his nation:

Should, however, any critic censure me for my strictures upon the tyrants or their bands of marauders or for my lamentations over my country’s misfortunes, I ask his indulgence for a compassion which falls outside an historian’s province.

(BJ 1.11)

Indeed, throughout his writings about the War, he scarcely misses the chance to denigrate the Jewish rebels and their leadership. He tries to present them as unscrupulous thugs, for the most part, divided among themselves. Josephus presents the decision to go to war with Rome as foisted on the Jewish mainstream by extremist radicals confident of divine assistance.¹⁷ However, the coins struck by the rebels present a rather different picture, of their highly organised monetary system, with closely controlled denominations and purity of the silver coins

maintained at 98 per cent. The design and execution of their coins are of a high standard and by no means inferior to those minted in Rome. What is more, the exceptional quality of their silver coinage was maintained at a right up to the fifth year of the War, the last year of issue when Jerusalem fell.¹⁸ These coins and their motifs project the impression of the functioning of an independent state called 'Israel', with its revived national language (Hebrew) and new era, operating an independent currency.¹⁹ This coinage suggests that the rebel administration must have been reasonably stable and orderly throughout the hostilities right up to the fall of Jerusalem. One therefore has to question the picture of the Jewish rebels painted by Josephus, being aware that he was writing from the perspective of a defector, under Flavian patronage and duty-bound to blacken Rome's foes.

Josephus is keen to emphasise that key players in the War on the Roman side, including Agrippa II (V 365), had attested to the accuracy of his *Bellum* in its Greek version, which was his earliest work that has come down to us and was mostly written between 75 and 79 CE, prior to the death of the emperor Vespasian.²⁰ He advertised the fact that he had presented copies to the *autokratores* themselves (i.e. Vespasian and Titus), 'when the events had hardly passed out of sight, conscious as I was that I had preserved the true story'.²¹ He was certainly pleased with the response that he received, stating that Titus was anxious that his volumes should be 'the sole authority from which the world should learn the facts, that he affixed his own signature to them and gave orders for their publication' (V 364).

It is not too surprising that Josephus' Roman masters were happy with his account; after all, Josephus had presented them in a favourable light, having deferred to the Commentaries (*hypomnēmata*) on the War supplied by Vespasian (V 342) and Titus (V 358), which probably incorporated the field reports of other Roman military commanders.²²

There are those, including Mason (2016, 3–59), who regard Josephus' account of the War as not much more than Flavian propaganda, by exaggerating the scale and severity of the conflict so as to help spawn a myth of a great Roman victory to the eternal glory of Vespasian and his sons. Yet, the position of Josephus, expressed in his writings, occasionally diverges from adulation of the Flavian regime, as in his somewhat sympathetic treatment of the final drama played out in the siege of Masada including the two passionate speeches attributed to their leader, Eleazar son of Jairus and rebel leaders (BJ 7.320–98), discussed briefly below. Less well known, perhaps, but no less revealing of Josephus' own position is his encomium to another rebel leader, the priestly Ananus son of Ananus,

which begins as follows:

A man on every ground revered and of the highest integrity, Ananus, with all the distinction of his birth, his rank and the honours to which he had attained, yet delighted to treat the very humblest as his equals. Unique in his love of liberty and an enthusiast for democracy, he on all occasions put the public welfare above his private interests.

(BJ 4.319–20)

From this passage and others (e.g. the address by a colleague of Ananus, Jesus son of Gamalas to Idumaeans in BJ 4.238–69), it is possible to discern that Josephus was not slavishly in thrall of his Flavian patrons, as recognised by scholars in the past few decades.²³ Deep down, his attitude towards the Romans and their conquest of his homeland must have been bitter-sweet. We also need to bear in mind the uniqueness of Josephus as the sole historian of a subject nation whose documenting of its rebellion against Roman rule survives.

Josephus admits to being economical with the truth occasionally, which, of course, he justifies:

For while veracity is incumbent upon a historian, he is nonetheless at liberty to refrain from harsh scrutiny of the misdeeds of individuals, not from any partiality for the offenders, but because of his own moderation.

(V 339)

Since he damns the rebels at almost every opportunity, one may wonder whether this statement is not a let-out clause for shying away from levelling serious criticism of the Roman commanders, including his patrons Vespasian and Titus, and their reprehensible actions, including culpability in the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem. In a similar vein, as we shall illustrate, Josephus tends to airbrush out of his historical narratives events that might displease his Flavian paymasters, such as Berenice's affair with Titus and Agrippa's role in excesses perpetrated against Jewish captives during the War and in its wake.

Josephus doesn't hesitate in criticising other historians for uncritically accepting contradictory sources:

... some [historians], having taken no part in the action, have collected from hearsay casual and contradictory stories which they have then edited in a rhetorical style.

(BJ 1.1)

Yet, he was prone to the same failing. His writings contain contradictory accounts of incidents and appraisals of individuals, including the subject of this study, Agrippa II.²⁴ In the *Bellum*, which was written when Agrippa and his sister, Berenice, were in Rome and

at the height of their influence at the imperial court and when Josephus was trying to curry favour with the king, Agrippa is presented as a dutiful client king, loyal to Rome. At the same time, he is cast as a responsible and caring representative of the Jewish nation.²⁵ In the *Vita*, written in about 93/94 CE as an appendix to the *Antiquitates Judaicae* (AJ 20.266; V 430), Josephus is again somewhat complimentary to Agrippa II and about his knowledge of Hellenic culture (V 359–67). On the other hand, Josephus sometimes adopts a different stance in the *Antiquitates*, which conforms to the genre of Graeco-Roman historiography, paraphrasing the history of the Jewish people to the outbreak of the Judaeo-Roman War and contains a reworking of the biblical narrative (Mason 2003b, 569; Bilde 1998, 200–204). In that work he offers a more nuanced appraisal of the Herodian royal house, including Agrippa II,²⁶ to the extent that he recognises that his less favourable comments about them might cause umbrage:

Although we have respect for many of his [i.e. Herod the Great's] descendants who are still reigning, we have honoured the truth more than them, and on some occasions, indeed, when this was rightly done, it provoked those very persons to anger.

(AJ 16.187)

Thus, Josephus highlights the imprudent decisions that Agrippa made in removing and appointing High Priests (AJ 20.179–81, 213–14) and criticises him for caving in to the demands of the Levites to be granted privileges which broke with tradition, both actions earning him harsh public censure (AJ 20.216–18). Also, in Book 20 of *Antiquitates*, Josephus repeats hostile rumours that Berenice, Agrippa II's sister, had entered into an incestuous relationship with him, and that she had deserted her erstwhile husband, Polemo II, King of Cilicia Trachaea, due to her licentiousness (AJ 20.145–46). The various instances of Agrippa's flawed conduct are enumerated by D. R. Schwartz, who attributes negative opinions about the king arising from Josephus' use of a priestly source which is hostile to him.²⁷ On the other hand, his namesake, S. Schwartz believes that the differences in Josephus' treatment of Agrippa II were governed largely by particular external influences at work and his changing aspirations while writing his respective works.²⁸ Several scholars have suggested that Josephus' unflattering comments about the king were added after Agrippa had died, citing a statement in *Vita* 359, rebuking Justus of Tiberias for not publishing his own account of the War, while King Agrippa was 'still among us'.²⁹ Whatever the reasons for mentioning some of Agrippa's faults, thankfully Josephus has left us a more rounded portrait of him than if all he had provided was a mere panegyric.³⁰

Certain discrepancies between the *Bellum* and the other works of Josephus may be put down to intentional corrections applied to the later writings that cover the same ground, namely the *Antiquitates* and *Vita*. Several scholars, including Mason, Rajak and Price, have examined the disparities and contradictions in Josephus' works and have drawn various inferences from them.³¹ The *Bellum* particularly suffers from having been written in a hurry and its account of the events connected with the War being compressed,³² although it has been noted that carelessness and sloppiness permeates Josephus' writings.³³ Then again, certain details divulged by Josephus are at odds with known facts, as, for example, the dispatch by Agrippa II of the commander-in-chief of his army, Philip son of Jacimus,³⁴ to Nero in early 67 CE, reported in *Vita* 408–409. Josephus states there that Philip was sent to Nero in Rome, but returned without an interview because Nero was 'in extremities because of the disturbances that had broken out and the civil war'. However, if the object of his mission was a meeting with the emperor, his destination in 67 CE ought not to have been Rome, because during that year, Nero was on extended leave in Greece, indulging artistic pursuits and not yet caught up in the civil disorders that resulted in his downfall. Perhaps, in this case, Josephus made a chronological error and should have placed Philip's mission to Rome a year later.³⁵

Like other ancient historians, Josephus cannot be relied upon when it comes to quantitative data cited by him, whether he is mentioning population statistics, battle casualties and other details.³⁶ Where it is possible to check his figures, as, for example, those specifying distances between places, he is generally found to be in serious error. Because he rarely indicates the sources of his data, one wonders whether Josephus is often relying on hearsay or even guesswork.

Some of the most glaring contradictions between the narratives of the *Bellum* and *Antiquitates*, on the one hand, and those of the *Bellum* and *Vita*, on the other, concern Josephus' account of his own actions both before and during the War.³⁷ Precisely because Josephus wrote his accounts of the War in the *Bellum* and *Vita* at least in part as apologia to justify his conduct, the reader must be wary in accepting some of his claims, which can be rather ludicrous. Mason details an extreme case, the discrepant accounts in the *Bellum* and *Vita* about Josephus' preparations of Galilee's defences ahead of the Roman offensive in Galilee.³⁸ For example, he states that he recruited 'upwards of a hundred thousand young men' to defend Galilee (*BJ* 2.576), whereas Josephus must have been aware that Rome's entire legionary army comprised no more than 150,000 men to maintain its vast empire.³⁹

While being aware of such inconsistencies and exaggerations in the

writings of Josephus, they do not heavily impact on Josephus' narrative of the sequence of events. However, there are also some regrettable gaps in the information that Josephus provides. He tells us very little about the consequences of the War in Judaea, its economy and the currencies used before, during and after the War, the administrative changes made to the province of Judaea by Rome after the fighting was over, and about Agrippa II and his position as client king in subsequent years.

There has been considerable criticism about the speeches that Josephus put into the mouths of leading figures in the historical drama that he recounts in the *Bellum*. He may have heard some of the orations delivered during the War and which he cites at length, including Agrippa's long address to the inhabitants of Jerusalem as the war was about to break out (*BJ* 2.345–404). This speech and its authorship in the form that we have it are examined separately in [Chapter 5](#).

Josephus undoubtedly reworked his own speeches when he wrote the *Bellum*. His first appeal to the defenders of Jerusalem, with its detailed lessons from history and contemporary politics, is another polished set-piece, no doubt 'improved' and extended as it has been left to us (*BJ* 5.380–420). Several of the speeches that Josephus reproduces could not possibly have been heard by the author. The oration delivered by the leader of the *sicarii*, Eleazar son of Jairus, persuading his followers at Masada to commit suicide, would have been one that was made to them alone and scholars question its authenticity altogether. Josephus relates that one of the few survivors of the suicide pact was a young woman who managed to slink away and hide, presumably while Eleazar was delivering his exhortation. The historian adds that she was unusually intelligent for a woman and it is not impossible that afterwards she relayed a reliable account of Eleazar's speech, which reached Josephus, despite the scepticism of Mason.⁴⁰ While it may incorporate the gist of Eleazar's desperate address, much of what we have of it from Josephus must be his own literary creation.⁴¹ Archaeology might be expected to shine light on this tragic episode, but the material finds to date are inconclusive. For example, the excavations have not revealed the remains of the 960 defenders who, Josephus tells us, had committed suicide (*BJ* 7.400). Just two skeletons of adult men – possibly Roman – and the hair of a woman were recovered from the terraced Northern Palace, while a further group of 25 skeletons was discovered in a cave outside the southern stretch of the perimeter walls, below the summit.⁴² There were clear signs that these human remains had been irreverently dumped in those locations, and it is reasonable to suppose that the bodies of most of the defenders had been cast off the summit of

Masada by the victorious Romans.⁴³ However, Y. Tsafrir, who was one of the discoverers of the human bones in the cave below the summit, is among those who defend their identification as the remains of Jews killed at Masada during the siege.⁴⁴ The fact that Josephus could specify the number of the defenders who took their own lives as ten individuals and the survivors as seven does suggest that he was citing from an official Roman record.⁴⁵ Another element of Josephus' account of the siege of Masada, the construction and use of the ramp used by Roman troops to scale the summit, while doubted by Mason and others,⁴⁶ has been shown to be entirely credible.⁴⁷

In employing set speeches, Josephus is resorting to a device that Thucydides introduced to historiography:

As to the speeches that were made by different men, either when they were about to begin the war or when they were already engaged therein, it has been difficult to recall with strict accuracy the words actually spoken, both for me as regards that which I myself heard, and for those who from various other sources have brought me reports. Therefore, the speeches are given in the language in which, as seemed to me, the several speakers would express, on the subjects under consideration, the sentiments most befitting the occasion, though at the same time I have adhered as closely as possible to the general sense of what was actually said.

(Thuc. 1.22.1–2)

The qualifications that Thucydides applies to his own use of speeches mean that we cannot be sure about the extent to which they are genuine reports of what was actually said. From his analysis of some of these speeches, Hornblower is in no doubt that the sentiments expressed in them do not necessarily represent his own opinions.⁴⁸ On the other hand, it is clear that set speeches were used by later Greek and Roman historians essentially as a rhetorical device, affording opportunities to employ them for making statements on the course of events, to score points and introduce themes.⁴⁹ This technique is commonplace in Greek and Roman histories. Tacitus, regarded as one of the finest of the Roman historians, uses it, but takes additional liberties, wholly inventing pre-battle pep talks for the British queen, Boudica (or Boudicca), and the Scottish tribal chieftain, Calgacus, in languages which would have been wholly incomprehensible to any Roman witness within earshot.

There are scholars who cast serious doubt, not only about the reliability of the speeches reported by Josephus, but altogether regarding that writer as a dependable source for the events that he covers. Mason is among those who takes such a negative view.⁵⁰ Another is A. Krause, who opines that Josephus is no better than a creative writer who 'presents a perspective on history through highly stylised narratives', which we should not mistake for a factual

record.⁵¹ Yet, where it is possible to check the reliability of his testimony, the archaeological evidence is generally supportive, as it is for Masada.⁵²

Some of Josephus' detractors might claim that his stained personal character, due to his treachery as a commander who forsook his comrades in arms and went over to the Roman enemy, hardly squares with being an objective chronicler. However, there are numerous cases where individuals who excel as chroniclers and historians are considered to lack moral fibre. Despite the various limitations, failings and contradictions, such as those discussed, we have to be grateful for the remarkably detailed account of the War bequeathed to us by Josephus. He has left a blow-by-blow account of the War, which is of inestimable value, and not least because it was written by an important eyewitness. Josephus furnishes important details about Agrippa II's milieu and family and he provides glimpses of the social circles in which the king mixed. The historian is especially informative about the events leading up to the outbreak of hostilities and casts light on the social and religious background. Even his preoccupations and biases tell us much about his life and times.⁵³ Of course, we need to be aware at every turn that Josephus was writing for specific audiences of his time, and his accounts in *Bellum*, on the one hand, and *Vita*, on the other hand, are occasionally at variance because Josephus is making discretionary choices.

Josephus' narrative accounts in the *Bellum* and *Vita*, disparate as they are in places, are coherent for the most part. One only has to compare his account of the siege of Jerusalem with the summary note left by the Roman historian, Tacitus, to appreciate the vast superiority of Josephus.⁵⁴ This should not be surprising in view of the fact that Tacitus was remote from the scene of the action and wrote several decades afterwards. Even worse, when Tacitus turns to providing an outline of Jewish history, customs and religion, what he serves up is a veritable 'amalgam of fact, nonsense and anti-Semitic slander'.⁵⁵ Another historian, who is more restrained in his references to the War, is Cassius Dio, but his brief account is much more removed in time from the events described (by about a century and a half) and it has come down to us in fragments and epitomes and hardly augments what we know from elsewhere. When scholars criticise Josephus, they need to bear in mind that other Graeco-Roman historians, including Polybius and Tacitus, and even the sensational yarn-teller, Suetonius, as flawed as they are, are consulted by sober scholars seeking information about the past. For all his shortcomings as a historian, we must be thankful to Josephus for most of our knowledge of the life and character of Agrippa II and for his detailed account of contemporaneous events. It is, of course, our great fortune that his

writings have survived largely unscathed.

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- 13 After Josephus was taken prisoner at the fall of Jotapata and until he was set free after Vespasian was proclaimed emperor and during the sieges of Machaerus and Masada when he was in Rome, he had little or no access to key witnesses or the events taking place.
- 14 Josephus was born in 37 CE (V 5) and Agrippa II in 27/28 CE (Kokkinos 1998, 276, 317).
- 15 See Rajak 2002, 75–76.
- 16 Mader 2000, 147; Bilde 1988, 191–92.
- 17 McLaren 2011, 149–53.
- 18 Ariel 2011, 385–86; Deutsch 2011, 369–71; Rappaport 2007, 103. For these fine silver shekels and half-shekels, occasional silver quarter shekels, marked ‘year 1’ to ‘year 5’ and ‘year 2’ to ‘year 4’ bronze fractional coins, together with an undated bronze unit (assigned to year 1), see *TJC*, 115–34 and nos. 183–216. The silver coins which, like all the others, have inscriptions in palaeo-Hebrew lettering, are marked with the denomination: ‘shekel of Israel’, ‘half a shekel’, ‘quarter of a shekel’ and ‘Jerusalem the Holy [City]’, while the bronze coins bear national-religious slogans, ‘for the freedom of Zion’ (years 2 and 3) and ‘for the redemption of Zion’ (year 4).
- 19 McLaren 2011, 144–49.
- 20 In his prologue to the *Bellum*, Josephus mentions that the Greek version of this work was a translation of an earlier one, composed in his ‘vernacular tongue’ (i.e. Aramaic) directed at a readership in the Mesopotamian basin that was familiar with that language (*BJ* 1.3, 6). For this task, he admits to obtaining the help of assistants with the Greek (*Ap.* 1.50). He probably spoke reasonable Greek, even as a young man, but confesses, even towards the end of his life, having to work hard ‘to partake of the realm of Greek prose and poetry after having gained a knowledge of Greek grammar, although the habitual use of my native tongue has prevented my attaining precision in the pronunciation’ (*AJ* 20.263); cf. Barclay 1996, 348.
- 21 V 361; cf. *Ap.* 1.50 and Mason 2003a, 64. The Greek term *autokrator* and its narrow Latin equivalent, *imperator*, means ‘triumphant general’, particularly in this context; see Mason 2001, 149–41 n. 1403. On coins issued in the Greek East under Roman rule (the so-called ‘Greek Imperial’ coins), though, *autokrator* usually stands for ‘emperor’.
- 22 Bilde 1988, 78; Broshi 1982, 381–82.
- 23 See, for example, Rajak 2002, 185–222.
- 24 Schwartz 2005, 74–75; 1982.
- 25 S. Schwartz 1990, 131–38.
- 26 Even within the same book, *AJ* 20, there are references to Agrippa II, which cast him in both a positive and a negative light; see S. Schwartz 1990, 154–58.
- 27 Schwartz 2005, 75; 1982, 255–63.
- 28 S. Schwartz 1990, 131–60.
- 29 For a bibliography of references in support of this view, see Den Hollander 2014, 272 n. 118.
- 30 See, for example, Den Hollander 2014, 272–73.
- 31 Mason 2009, 103–37; Rajak 2002, 163–66 and n. 37; Price 1992, 186–88.
- 32 Price 1991, 93.
- 33 Cohen 1979, index, s.v. ‘Josephus, carelessness and sloppiness’; Price 1991, 92–93.

- 34 On Philip son of Jacimus, see Mason 2008, 321 n. 2648; Price 1991. He is variously called *eparchos* (V 46), *stratēgos* (BJ 2.421) and *stratopedarchēs* (V 407; BJ 2.556) by Josephus. *Eparchos* is a term frequently used in classical texts for an officer with a rank equivalent to that of a Roman prefect (*praefectus*) or more specifically praetorian prefect (*praefectus praetoria*); see Mason 1974, 45, 138–40. *Stratēgos* is often translated as ‘general’, although it is used by classical authors for a wide range of ranks from military commander up to military and civil governor (Mason 1974, 86–87, 155–58). In almost all cases, *stratēgos* denotes a rank superior to that of *eparchos* (Tully 1998, 227). *Stratopedarchēs* is a term frequently used to denote camp prefect (*praefectus castrorum*), although it was also used for the commander of an army in the field (Saddington 2009, 314; Tully 1998, 229–32). Therefore, when the above three terms are used as alternative titles for Philip son of Jacimus, they are somewhat unspecific and even contradictory. As Price (1991, 77 n. 2) rightly points out, we have little hard information about the organisation and none about the size of Agrippa’s army. It was definitely inferior to that of his great-grandfather, which had up to 30,000 men in its heyday (Saddington 2009, 315), judging by his modest contribution of about 3,000 men to the military expeditions of Cestius Gallus and Vespasian. Philip must have been Agrippa II’s commander-in-chief, judging from the contexts in which he is mentioned by Josephus. The historian actually tells us that Philip was mandated by Agrippa to train and lead his army (AJ 17.31), and also entrusted with sensitive military and diplomatic missions (BJ 2.421–37, 556–58; V 46–47; 408–409).
- 35 Price 1991, 91–92.
- 36 Broshi 1982, 379–81.
- 37 For a detailed analysis of the relationship, these works and discrepancies between them, see Cohen 1979, 3–180.
- 38 It is possible that the comprehensive revision of the sequence of events described in *Vita* was prompted by Justus of Tiberias’ rival account, which contradicted Josephus’ *Bellum* narrative; see Mason 2016, 352–58.
- 39 Mason 2016, 140. Josephus’ figures for casualties and prisoners, like the number of recruits, are all way too high; Levick 2017, 36.
- 40 Mason 2016, 344.
- 41 Cohen 1982.
- 42 Zias and Gorski 2006; cf. Yadin 1966, 54, 56, 93–99. The ethnic identity of the individuals whose remains have been found in the cave have also been queried; see Zias 2000.
- 43 Cohen 1982, 394.
- 44 Tsafrir 2012.
- 45 Newell 1989, 289.
- 46 Goldfus et al. 2016; Mason 2016, 572–74; Arubas and Goldfus 2008, 1939.
- 47 Davies and Magness 2017; Magness 2011, 356–58.
- 48 Hornblower 1987, 45–72.
- 49 Stadter 1973, 111.
- 50 Mason 2016, 58, 63.
- 51 Krause 2017, 18–28.
- 52 For example, Syon 2002, 136–37 (Gamala/Gamla); Aviam 2015, 119, 125 (Jotapata/Yodfat).
- 53 Schwartz 2013, 4.
- 54 For a comparison of the treatment of events in Judaea by Roman historians and Josephus, see Schwartz 2013, 130–45.





3 Agrippa's early years

The full appellation (*tria nomina*) of Agrippa II (fl. 27/28–94/95 CE) was Marcus Julius Agrippa, like that of his father, Agrippa I (fl. 10 BCE–44 CE).⁵⁶ His parentage was somewhat incestuous, his father and mother being cousins, with his mother, Cyprus, the granddaughter of both Herod's eldest brother Phasaël and of Herod himself by his Hasmonaean wife Mariamme I (AJ 18.130–31). That made him a great-grandson of Herod the Great on both sides of his family. Mariamme I was a Hasmonaean princess, the granddaughter of John Hyrcanus II, one-time Jewish High Priest and very briefly king of Judaea (AJ 13.408; 14.4–7, 11; BJ 1.109, 120–22). By Mariamme I, Herod had two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus. Although Agrippa I's

father was the second son of that royal marriage and his elder brother Alexander had two sons, Agrippa I was highly talented and ambitious, benefiting also from good fortune. He managed to work his way up the ladder to become client king of Judaea, ruling a domain that rivalled that of his grandfather Herod the Great in size. It was no mean achievement, which involved gaining the esteem of the Roman Imperial court so as to bring about a very rare reversal from direct rule by Rome to the restoration of a client monarchy, but that is exactly what Agrippa I managed to accomplish.

Agrippa II was one of five children of Agrippa I and Cyprus, there being two sons and three daughters. The eldest was Drusus, named after the deceased son of Tiberius and friend of Agrippa I's father, born in c. 24 CE, but he did not survive into adulthood (*AJ* 18.132; *BJ* 2.220). Agrippa II's three sisters were Berenice (named after her paternal grandmother), Mariamme (named after her paternal great-grandmother) and Drusilla (named after Caligula's sister who died the year she was born).

Agrippa was probably born in Rome in 27/28 CE, and like many other descendants of Herod the Great, he spent his childhood there and was educated at the Imperial court as was customary for offspring of client kings.⁵⁷ There he became more conversant with Hellenic culture, acquired some Latin and taught about Roman history, mores and much else.⁵⁸

Agrippa II returned to Judaea at the age of five, in the company of his father, Agrippa I, who had to leave Rome in 23 CE after running into debt through extravagant living, making lavish gifts and paying bribes (*AJ* 18.145–47). Pursued by his creditors, Agrippa I retreated to a fortified manor at Malatha in Idumaea (Tel Malhata? c. 25 km east of Beersheba), evidently part of an ancestral estate, the Herodian dynasty having originated somewhere in that region. After remaining there for almost a decade, through his wife's intercession with Herodias, Agrippa's sister and wife of Herod Antipas, he and his family were invited to take up residence in Tiberias in c. 34 CE, with Agrippa being appointed commissioner or overseer of markets (*agoranomos*) and the award of a stipend.⁵⁹ A lead weight found in the area of Tiberias, dated to the 34th year of Herod the Tetrarch (Antipas), that is, 29/30 CE, is embossed with the name Gaius Julius, *agoranomos*.⁶⁰ Judging by this combination of the imperial *nomina*, it is possible to deduce that this office-holder was a Herodian aristocrat, many of whom acquired Julio-Claudian Latin names, but was probably not Agrippa I, as had been supposed by A. (Kushnir)-Stein.⁶¹ What the inscribed weight confirms is that Antipas' capital Tiberias had become an important centre of trade, to the extent that the office of *agoranomos* was worthy of royal Herodian holders.

Perceiving Agrippa I to be a dangerous rival, Herodias' husband, Herod Antipas, rubbed in the fact that Agrippa was dependent on his charity, and feeling humiliated, he and his family decided to leave Tiberias for Antioch, the capital of Syria, where they lodged with a friend from the time of his domicile in Rome, L. Pomponius Flaccus, who was then governor of that province.⁶² The hospitality received there was short-lived, and Agrippa senior, chronically short of money, went cap in hand to the Jewish magnate in Alexandria and brother of the philosopher Philo, Alexander the Alabarch, for a loan.⁶³ From there, he proceeded to Italy in 36 CE, while Cyprus and her children, Drusus (then aged 13),⁶⁴ Agrippa the younger (nine), Berenice (eight), and Mariamme (two) – Drusilla was not yet born – returned to Judaea in 36 CE (*AJ* 18.150–60).

On his arrival in Italy at Puteoli, Agrippa I called on Tiberius, who was residing in nearby Capri. He was received cordially on arrival, but his welcome was brief, owing to the arrival of a note from Herennius Capito, an imperial procurator, disclosing that Agrippa was heavily in debt to the imperial treasury and had absconded (*AJ* 18.161–63). Thereupon, Agrippa I turned to Antonia Minor for financial help to repay his creditors.⁶⁵ The close friendship between the two families had been forged by Agrippa I's upbringing alongside her son, Claudius, at the imperial court (*AJ* 18.164–65). Thanks to Antonia's obliging response, Agrippa was able to extricate himself from his financial woes and was readmitted to the presence of Tiberius.

Through his close ties with the imperial family, Agrippa was able to cultivate the friendship of Gaius Caligula, the grandson of Antonia Minor. However, a piece of flattery that Agrippa uttered on one occasion when the two were out riding together nearly put his life in jeopardy (*BJ* 2.179–80; *AJ* 18.168–204). The gist of it was that he fervently hoped that the elderly Tiberius would hastily make way for Gaius as Emperor, commenting that the latter was more competent in every respect. This remark was overheard by a member of Agrippa's entourage, Eutychus, his chariot driver and freedman of the king. When, later, Eutychus was accused of stealing some of his master's clothes, he tried to flee but was caught. On being hauled before the Prefect of Rome, L. Calpurnius Piso, he was asked why he had fled. He replied that he bore a secret message for the emperor pertaining to his personal security, and so he was dispatched in chains to Capri, where Tiberius was staying. When, after a long delay, a hearing was granted, and Tiberius learnt what Agrippa had uttered, he had Agrippa fettered and imprisoned, where he remained until that Emperor died in 37 CE (*AJ* 18.205–236). Thereupon, Caligula immediately released his friend from his incarceration and conferred on him the tetrarchy of his uncle Philip, now deceased without issue, which comprised territory north-

east of Lake Tiberias, as well as that of the Ituraean dynast, Lysanias.⁶⁶ The new Emperor also awarded Agrippa the royal title, personally placing a diadem on his head. In exchange for the iron chain used for his incarceration, Caligula presented him with one of gold of equal weight (AJ 18.237). On top of these gifts, the Senate favoured him with the *ornamenta praetoria*.⁶⁷

In the second year of Caligula's reign, 38 CE, Agrippa I was permitted to return to his kingdom (AJ 18.238). When Herod Antipas forfeited his tetrarchy the following year, Caligula augmented Agrippa's kingdom with his uncle's confiscated territories (AJ 19.351). Herod Antipas' fall from grace was the consequence of an unfortunate miscalculation made by his wife, Herodias, who had pressed Caligula in person to confer a royal title on her husband. The couple had felt aggrieved that Antipas' successful nephew had managed to upstage him. They were trailed to Italy by one of Agrippa's freedmen, Fortanus, who brought a suit of charges against Antipas with conspiracy against the Principate. The two sides appeared before Caligula, who was staying at his imperial residence in the resort town of Baiae in the Bay of Naples, famous for its curative hot springs. Persuaded that Agrippa's accusations were justified, Caligula deposed Herod Antipas on the spot and banished him to Lugdunum (Lyon) in Gaul (BJ 2.182–83; AJ 18.240–55).

The assassination of Caligula early in 41 CE, and the key role played by Agrippa I in the succession of Claudius as Roman Emperor, brought further rewards for Agrippa I. He was granted all the remaining lands that had had formed part of Herod the Great's realm, namely Judaea and Samaria, and his title as client king of this substantially enlarged domain was sealed in a formal treaty in the Roman Forum (BJ 2.215–16; AJ 19.274–75). According to Cassius Dio (60.8.2), Agrippa I was invested with the *ornamenta consularia* on this occasion. To Agrippa I's younger brother, Herod, Claudius 'awarded the *ornamenta praetoria* and the principality of Chalcis'.⁶⁸ And he permitted them [the two brothers] to enter the Senate [in the Forum] and to express thanks to him in Greek' (Dio 60.8.3). Josephus adds that the grant of Chalcis to his brother was at the express request of Agrippa (AJ 19.277).

This solemn event is vividly captured on a pair of bronze coins, one struck by Agrippa I and the other by Herod of Chalcis.⁶⁹ The motif on the obverse of both issues depicts the issuing monarch standing to the right and his brother on the left, each dressed in a cuirass and holding wreaths over the head of the emperor Claudius, who stands in the middle.⁷⁰ There is no doubt who is who because the figures are appropriately labelled 'King Agrippa', 'King Herod' and 'Augustus Caesar', in Greek. Claudius is represented clad in a toga drawn over his head (*capite velato*) and holding a *patera*, a shallow dish used for

libations.⁷¹ The event represented is made clear on the reverse of Agrippa's coin, which bears a Greek inscription arranged in two concentric circles, separated by a wreath, around clasped hands, which translated, runs: 'Oaths of the Great King Agrippa (sworn) to Augustus Caesar, the Senate and the Roman people, his friendship and alliance (*philia kai symmachia*)'.⁷² The terminology is the formal one that was regularly applied to client kings of Rome, which in Latin was rendered as *sociusque et amicus*. The wreaths on both sides of the mirror coins of Agrippa I and Herod of Chalcis indicate that they had important symbolic significance at the treaty ceremony.⁷³ On other coins of Agrippa I, a public building is depicted framing Agrippa, Claudius and two other figures.⁷⁴ Again, in this motif, the Emperor is togate, *capite velato*, and holds out a *patera*. The figure of King Agrippa, identified on the left (i.e. to the emperor's right), also holds out a *patera*. A. Burnett identified the scene represented as the consecration of the treaty between emperor and king in a ceremony held in the Capitoline temple in Rome.⁷⁵ He interprets one of the lower central figures in the scene as a kneeling participant, probably a priest, in the act of killing a sow for sacrifice, which was part of a time-honoured Roman ritual when sealing a treaty with foreign rulers, as we are informed by Suetonius (*Claud.* 25.5), but this detail is omitted by Josephus. Suetonius mentions that Claudius had this solemn ritual performed in the Forum (Romanum), so the venue used on this occasion may not have been the more traditional one, the Capitoline temple, but an altar in front of the Senate House or in a temple close-by in the Forum.⁷⁶ Doubtless, Agrippa II was enjoined to participate in a very similar ceremony when he succeeded his father and possibly yet again when his realm was enlarged.

On his coins struck at mints outside Jerusalem, Agrippa I completely disregarded the Jewish taboo of avoiding human images and had no qualms in displaying his own portrait (Figure 3.1a) and those of his wife, Cyprus and his son Agrippa II (Figure 3.1b, 3.2); see Section A2.1, n. 460.

It may have been Agrippa I's elevation to kingship that prompted him to arrange suitors for two of his daughters. Berenice was betrothed to Marcus Julius Alexander, the younger son of the Jewish magnate, Alexander the Alabarch of Alexandria, who had earlier rescued Agrippa from financial straits; she was only 12/13 at the time.⁷⁷ The second daughter, Mariamme, was promised to Julius Archelaus, the son of Alexas Helcias, Agrippa I's commander-in-chief.⁷⁸ Berenice's marriage to Marcus Julius Alexander was of short duration because he died just three years later. Only a few months afterwards, in the spring of 44 CE, Berenice was wedded to her uncle, Herod of Chalcis: she was still barely 16 years old (*AJ* 19.277, 354).

By marrying Herod, and through his royal title, King of Chalcis, as attested repeatedly by Josephus and on his coin inscriptions,⁷⁹ Berenice acquired the title of ‘Queen’ (*basilissa*). This appellation appears in commemorative inscriptions, for example, on a stone plinth of a statue of Berenice erected in Athens, dated to 61 CE,⁸⁰ and in Josephus (Jos. V 119, etc.). Likewise, in Latin texts Berenice is called *regina*.⁸¹

Figure 3.1 Portraits of Agrippa II’s parents: **(a)** Agrippa I on a coin of year 7 (42/43 CE) of his reign. Æ (bronze) 21mm, 9.68 g. Mint of Caesarea Maritima. Inscription: BACIAEYC MEΓAC AΓPIΠΠAC ΦΙΛOKAICAP (‘Great King Agrippa, friend of Caesar’). *RPC* 1, no.4985 = *TJC*, no. 122. CNG Auction 63 (21 May 2003), lot 789. Courtesy Classical Numismatic Group, Inc; **(b)** Cyprus (Kypros) on a coin of year 2 (37/8 CE) of Agrippa I’s reign. Mint of Caesarea Philippi (Paneas). Inscription (barely visible on this example): KYΠΠOC BACI[AICCA?] (‘Queen Cyprus’). Æ 15mm, 4.81 g. *RPC* 1, no. 4975 corr. = *TJC*, no. 114. Heritage World Coins, Auction 3032 (10–12 Apr., 2014), lot 23426. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, Inc.

Figure 3.2 Portrait of the young Agrippa II on a coin of King Agrippa I, of year 5 (40/41 CE) of his reign. Æ 15 mm, 2.23 g. Mint of Caesarea Maritima. Inscription (barely visible on this example): AΓPIΠΠOY YIOY BACIAEΩΣ (‘of Agrippa, son of the King’). *TJC*, no. 119 = *RPC* 1, no. 4979. Fontanille Coins, Auction 83 (1–7 Mar. 2016), lot 8. Courtesy of Fontanille Coins.

Agrippa I showed himself to be no mere Roman lackey. He incurred the wrath of the new Roman legate (governor) for Syria, C. Vibius Marsus (41/42–44/45 CE),⁸² by setting about strengthening Jerusalem’s defences and embarking on the construction of a new wall to protect the burgeoning northern suburb of Jerusalem that sprawled outside the existing ramparts.⁸³ Marsus complained about this move to the emperor, which resulted in an order to Agrippa to cease work on the wall. The bad blood between the legate and Agrippa was further aggravated when Agrippa organised a conclave of client kings in Tiberias (*AJ* 19.338–42). The other participants were Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Commagene – whose daughter Jotape was married to Agrippa I’s youngest brother, Aristobulus (*AJ* 18.135) – Sampsigeramus II of Emesa, Cotys IX of Armenia Minor and Polemo II

of Pontus and Cilicia Trachaea. Agrippa's brother, Herod of Chalcis also attended the conclave. Augustus had encouraged networking among client kings as one of the planks of imperial policy,⁸⁴ but this gathering of so many client rulers at once was deemed prejudicial to Rome's interests and the visiting dignitaries were sent packing by Marsus, when he duly turned up in Tiberias. Although Agrippa treated him with utmost courtesy, this did little to mollify the Roman governor. It was during the meeting of client kings at Tiberias that Polemo II may have first clapped eyes on Agrippa I's eldest daughter Berenice, who he would briefly marry two decades later.

Agrippa I's reign was marked by a conciliatory policy towards his Jewish subjects and their co-religionists in the diaspora, identifying with them and demonstrating his generosity to Jewish communities abroad. 'He scrupulously observed the traditions of his people. He neglected no rite of purification and no day passed for him without the prescribed sacrifice' (*AJ* 19.331). On entering Jerusalem for the first time as king of Judaea, Agrippa proceeded immediately to the Temple and offered sacrifices of thanksgiving, participating fully in the religious rituals (*AJ* 19.293). Agrippa I also presented the golden chain that was given to him by Caligula as an offering to the Temple (*AJ* 19.294–96). He seems to have been at least as proud of his Hasmonaean Jewish ancestry as of his Edomite Herodian heritage. It is related in the Mishnah (*m.Sotah* 7.8), that on one occasion, while King Agrippa was reading a Torah scroll before an assembly in the Temple, he came to the passage in Deuteronomy 17.15, where it is written: 'You may not set over you (as king) a foreign man (who is not your brother)' and burst into tears. The congregants responded: 'Do not fear, Agrippa, you are our brother, you are our brother, you are our brother'. This episode illustrates the empathy that he established with the Jewish populace.⁸⁵ Agrippa I's boldest act on their behalf was his intercession with the emperor Caligula to dissuade him from having a statue of himself erected in the Temple in Jerusalem (Philo, *Leg.* 276–329; *AJ* 18.295–301). There were very few individuals who would take the enormous risk to their own lives in trying to convince a Roman emperor, particularly Caligula, that they had made a misguided decision. The tactful manner in which Agrippa raised the issue with his imperial master attests to his remarkable diplomatic skills.

We are told that Agrippa I 'enjoyed residing in Jerusalem and did so constantly' (*AJ* 19.331), although this may be an exaggeration. At any rate, he manifested his favour to the inhabitants of the Holy City by remitting their taxes (*AJ* 19.299). When some youthful hotheads from Dora on the coast set up an image of the Roman Emperor in the local synagogue as an act of provocation, Agrippa immediately alerted

Publius Petronius, the Roman governor of Syria (from 39? to 41/42 CE),⁸⁶ who ordered the leading men of the city to remedy this violation of Claudius' edict permitting the Jews to observe their religious observances without hindrance (AJ 19.300–12). However, Agrippa I's frequent replacement of High Priests, thrice within three years, would suggest that there were tensions either with or among the Jewish establishment during his reign.⁸⁷ This is a pattern that would be repeated *a fortiori* during the reign of his son, Agrippa II.

It has been suggested that Agrippa I completed one of the two aqueducts that supplied water to Jerusalem from springs in the hills to the south, namely the so-called Upper-Level Aqueduct.⁸⁸ However, it has also been argued that this aqueduct, like its Lower-Level counterpart had been in operation since the days of Herod the Great.⁸⁹ It is possible, though, that both the earlier Roman Prefect of Judaea, Pontius Pilate, and Agrippa I were responsible not for building new aqueducts, but for renovating or extending existing ones.⁹⁰

Agrippa I also actively engaged in promoting the interests of diaspora Jewry, as did his grandfather Herod before him (AJ 16.27–65). While passing through Alexandria in the summer of 38 CE en route from Rome to begin his rule in Judaea, he learnt about the abusive treatment being meted out to the Jews of the city by the Prefect of Egypt, Aulus Avillius Flaccus. He responded by penning a letter to the emperor Caligula apprising him of the governor's abuses (Philo, *In Flacc.* 25–28, 103). Agrippa's letter must have contributed to the downfall of Flaccus, because just a few months' later Caligula ordered the arrest of the troublesome official, who was returned to Rome for trial (Philo, *In Flacc.* 109–16). Flaccus was sentenced to banishment and confiscation of all his property (Philo, *In Flacc.* 151).

During that visit, the Greek adversaries of the Alexandrian Jews staged a mock parade, parodying Agrippa I's progress through the city accompanied by his bodyguard arrayed in gilded armour (Philo, *In Flacc.* 30, 35–39). A local half-wit, known as Carabas ('Cabbage'), was kitted out in a purple rug, handed a papyrus stick to represent a sceptre, borne in procession to the gymnasium with a sham bodyguard and greeted with cries of 'Marin' (Aramaic for 'our lord'). To the majority of Levantine Greeks, Agrippa I was seen simply as a Jew: the insult levelled by the Alexandrian-Greek anti-Semite, Isidorus, in referring to 'King Agrippa' as a 'three-obol worth (i.e. cheap) Jew', as recorded in a Greek papyrus fragment of the so-called *Acta Isidori*, is likely to relate to the same episode.⁹¹

Despite the rejection of Agrippa I by many of Greek heritage, he was a generous patron of Graeco-Roman culture and institutions, following in the footsteps of his grandfather, Herod the Great (AJ 19.328). Like his forebear, Agrippa I was a benefactor, particularly of

Berytus (Beirut), where he paid for a theatre, amphitheatre, baths and porticoes (AJ 19.335); before him, Herod the Great had endowed Berytus with exedras, porticoes, temples and an agora (BJ 1.422). Epigraphic evidence referring to benefactions of Herod, Agrippa I, Berenice (and Agrippa II?) is provided by a dedicatory inscription from one of the porticoes in Berytus⁹² (Figures 3.3 and 3.4). Agrippa I also sponsored spectacles and musical entertainment in the theatre and blood-soaked gladiatorial contests in its amphitheatre (AJ 19.336–37). The choice of Berytus for Herodian prodigality was no accident: it was the major Roman *colonia* on the eastern Mediterranean littoral.⁹³ In 15 BCE, Berytus had been refounded as Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Berytus.⁹⁴ Veterans of two Roman legions were established there by the emperor Augustus, the Vth Macedonica and the IIIrd Gallica.

In the summer of 44 CE, Agrippa I fell mortally ill while celebrating spectacles in the theatre of Caesarea, in honour of the Emperor Claudius, cutting short his reign in his eighth year as king.⁹⁵

The cultural dichotomy of Agrippa I is reflected in his coins. The sole bronze coin issue in his name minted in Jerusalem is dated to his sixth regnal year (41/42 CE). It lacks the representation of any human or animal form, in deference to Jewish sensibilities. Rather, it features a parasol on the obverse and three ears of grain (barley or wheat) on the reverse.⁹⁶ Alongside the parasol, an ancient symbol of royalty in the Middle East, is the Greek inscription ‘of King Agrippa’, indicating that this device referred to him, which makes sense, because monarchs are frequently depicted beneath parasols in ancient Near Eastern art, for example, on Assyrian and Persian reliefs. On the face of it, the ears of grain represent an ‘innocuous’ depiction of a staple of the Land of Israel, but here it was intended as an oblique reference to the deification of Julia Augusta (Livia) by her grandson Claudius that same year⁹⁷; Livia was often identified with Ceres, the goddess of agriculture and fecundity, commonly symbolised by three ears of grain. By contrast, Agrippa’s several coin issues from the mints of Caesarea Philippi (Paneas) and Caesarea Maritima show total disregard of the ban on human images that was enforced in Jewish Jerusalem. Instead, they emulate the normal coinage of Graeco-Roman mints, and bear portraits of the ruler, in this case the king, his consort and his son, and common ‘Roman Imperial’ motifs, including a representation of Tyche. As mentioned above, two rather special subjects depicted on coins struck for Agrippa I at Caesarea Maritima refer to the ceremony marking the treaty between that king, Herod of Chalcis and Claudius and are dated to years 7 and 8 of his reign (42/43 and 43/44 CE).

Museum, belonged to a portico of a public building in that city originally built by Herod the Great and restored by Agrippa II and his sister Berenice. AE 2006.1578 = IGLBibbia 41. Photograph courtesy of David Hendin

Figure 3.4 Remains of a colonnade from the area of the forum of Berytus, near where the monumental inscription was found. It has been re-erected outside the Beirut Museum. Photograph courtesy of David Hendin.

By playing to the two very different galleries at the same time, Agrippa I can be accused of blatant opportunism and hypocrisy. Before judging him too harshly on this score, we need to bear in mind the environments in which he had to operate. He was obliged to deal with two very different societies and cultures, with their irreconcilable religious practices and outlooks. In these circumstances, it is possible to view Agrippa I as a consummate pragmatist, who tread carefully and tuned his response to suit each situation that he encountered. As deft as he was, he occasionally slipped up quite badly, for example, his *faux pas* in denigrating the emperor Tiberius in the presence of a member of his staff, in his tangle with the Roman legate for Syria, Marsus, over the building of a new wall in Jerusalem and for holding the conclave of client kings in Tiberias. We shall see that his son, Agrippa II, lacked Agrippa I's flair and being overly cautious (to put it mildly), he came unstuck at a critical moment.

At the time of Agrippa I's death, his surviving son, the younger Agrippa, was in Rome, being brought up and tutored at the imperial court of the emperor Claudius (*AJ* 19.360; 20.9). Agrippa I's eldest daughter, Berenice was his only married offspring when he died, having recently taken her uncle, Herod of Chalcis, as her second spouse.⁹⁸ Agrippa I's two youngest children, Mariamme and Drusilla, were then just ten and six years old, respectively (*AJ* 19.354). The Roman Emperor was minded to appoint the young Agrippa as successor to his father's kingdom but, according to Josephus, Claudius' councillors ('his freedmen and friends') cautioned against this, arguing that 'it was hazardous to entrust so important a kingdom to one who was quite young and had not even passed out of boyhood and who would find it impossible to sustain the cares of administration'.⁹⁹ Instead, a new governor, Cuspius Fadus, was appointed to administer Judaea on behalf of Rome (*AJ* 19.363).

Herod of Chalcis petitioned Claudius in 44 CE to assign to him the authority which his late brother had held as Curator of the Temple (*BJ* 20.15–16). At that point in time, there was no member of the Herodian dynasty with territorial jurisdiction over any part of the

Land of Israel. The Romans, recognising that the Herods had maintained close links with both the Judaeen élite and the imperial court and appreciating their value as interlocutors between Rome and Judaea, acceded to that request. The responsibilities of that office entailed appointing and dismissing High Priests, overseeing the temple treasury and maintaining and upgrading the structures of the Temple compound.

The governors, Cuspius Fadus (44/45–45/46 CE) and his successor, the Jewish apostate, Tiberius Julius Alexander (46/47–c. 48 CE), ‘by abstaining from all interference with the customs of the country (they) kept the nation at peace’.¹⁰⁰ However, that was not quite true, in view of what we learn from Josephus in the *Antiquitates*. Fadus aroused the ire of the Jews by demanding that the vestments of the High Priest be handed over to Roman (i.e. his) custody. They saw that move as an attempt to encroach on their religious freedom. Agrippa junior, who had remained at the imperial court in Rome, entreated Claudius to grant the request of the Jewish petitioners and to instruct Fadus accordingly, which he did (*AJ* 20.6–14). This was a significant victory for Agrippa as advocate of the Jews because it amounted to the wishes of a minor client royal overriding an instruction issued by the chief representative of the emperor in Judaea.

A serious disturbance erupted during the governorship of Fadus when a certain charismatic individual, evidently with messianic pretensions, named Theudas, attracted a crowd of followers and persuaded them follow him to the River Jordan with their possessions (*AJ* 20.97–98; Acts 5.36). He claimed to be a prophet and that, at his command, the river would part to afford an easy crossing. Perceiving this movement to be subversive, Fadus dispatched a squadron of cavalry to crush Theudas and his followers, which they easily accomplished. This action resulted in many casualties, with Theudas being captured and beheaded.

Josephus paints a picture of progressive disintegration of law and order, which culminated in the outbreak of the Judaeen-Roman War. It is likely that this is a somewhat simplified representation of the developments in Judaea, designed to support his argument in laying much of the blame for the eventual War on Jewish hotheads, although he does show that the Roman authorities, especially the provincial governors, also bore culpability for the disastrous denouement.

Under Ventidius Cumanus (48/49–c. 52 CE), tensions increased.¹⁰¹ The first inflammatory incident under his watch involved a misdemeanour of a Roman soldier stationed on the Temple porticoes to keep an eye on the throng of pilgrims crowding the Temple precincts for the Passover festival (*BJ* 2.224–27; *AJ* 20.105–12). The soldier contemptuously bared ‘his backside to the Jews and made a

noise in keeping with his posture' (BJ 2.224). Tempers flared and Cumanus ordered reinforcements which skirmished with the incensed crowd. That intervention led to a stampede, resulting in thousands of casualties and much bitterness (BJ 2.227; AJ 20.112).

In the next incident, an imperial slave was robbed by bandits near Beth Horon, on his way to Jerusalem from the coast. Cumanus ordered reprisal raids on villages in the neighbourhood. Finding a Torah scroll in one of the settlements, a Roman soldier tore it up and then burned the fragments. Deeply offended by this outrage, protestors demanded that the miscreant be suitably punished and Cumanus felt obliged to have the soldier responsible executed (BJ 2.228–31; AJ 20.13–17).

Another serious outbreak of violence arose out of the simmering animosities between Jews and Samaritans. One or more Galilean pilgrims were set upon and murdered by Samaritans while passing through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. Cumanus failed to deal with that crime as a matter of urgency, so that Jewish activists took matters into their own hands and fell in with already notorious brigand leaders Eleazar, son of Deinaius,¹⁰² and one Alexander (not mentioned in *Antiquitates*). They raided Samaritan settlements south of Shechem, burning them and massacring their inhabitants indiscriminately. At that point, Cumanus sprang into action and proceeded from Caesarea at the head of a detachment of cavalry, known as 'Sebastenes', because they were recruited from among the gentile population of Sebaste (Samaria) and its vicinity.¹⁰³ This force of 'Sebastenes' counter-attacked Eleazar's irregulars, killing a number of them and taking many prisoners. Magistrates from Jerusalem then quickly intervened, urging their coreligionists to disengage and return home. Their efforts proved fruitless and so the Samaritan leaders appealed to the serving Roman legate for Syria, Ummidius Quadratus,¹⁰⁴ requesting him to have their attackers punished. Quadratus listened to accounts from both sides and then instructed that captured Jewish fighters be executed. At the same time, owing to the seriousness of the strife and concerned about where it might lead, he intervened with his own military force (Tac., *Ann.* 12.54). It must be pointed out that during the period of procuratorial rule, Judaea was not a fully-fledged Roman province, as is often assumed, but was attached to the province of Syria (AJ 17.314), which was governed by a *legatus Augusti pro praetore*, that is, a legate of the emperor, with the rank of praetor, who was of Senatorial rank. By contrast, the governor of Judaea, who initially bore the title Prefect and after Agrippa I, Procurator, was drawn from the lesser equestrian rank and reported to the legate for Syria.¹⁰⁵ Accordingly, Mason has defined pre-70 Judaea as an 'ethnic zone of Syria'.¹⁰⁶

Having succeeded in restoring order, Quadratus decided that Jewish and Samaritan leaders should be sent to the emperor Claudius to report on their conduct during that outbreak of violence and present their respective versions of events. Agrippa attended the hearings in Rome and made a passionate defence on behalf of the Jews. He also entreated Empress Agrippina to appeal to her husband on the merits of the Jewish case: his father, Agrippa I, had been a close acquaintance of her grandmother, Antonia Minor (AJ 18.143). Persuaded by the pleading of his protégé, Agrippa, the emperor Claudius condemned the Samaritans for instigating the violence and ordered several of their leaders who had come to Rome to be put to death. As for Cumanus, Claudius ordered that he be sent into exile.

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- 56 The *tria nomina* of Agrippa II have been ascertained from inscriptions IGLS 16.197 = SEG 49.2011; cf. Rey-Coquais 1999, 638–40. Kokkinos (1998, 272 n. 26) and Schürer (1973, 442, n. 1) argue that Agrippa I had the same *tria nomina*. A *tria nomina* is a Roman convention, in this case expressing indebtedness of the Herodian monarchs to the Augustan Principate; ‘Marcus’ and ‘Agrippa’ honour Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, Augustus’ deputy and son-in-law, who visited Herod’s kingdom in 15 BCE, while the *nomen* ‘Julius’ refers to the imperial Julian family and its founder, Gaius Julius Caesar. For short biographies of Agrippa II, see Kokkinos 1998, 317–41; Sullivan 1977, 329–45; Schürer 1973, 471–83. There is a monograph devoted to Agrippa I by D. R. Schwartz (1990); see also Kokkinos 1998, 271–304; Sullivan 1977, 322–29; Schürer 1973, 442–54.
- 57 AJ 19.360. For his birth in Rome in 27/28 CE, see Kokkinos 1998, 276, 317. Sending children of client kings to the imperial capital for their education was a practice encouraged by the Julio-Claudian emperors, starting with Augustus, to help bind the subject monarchies closely to Rome and to one another (Suet., Aug. 48). Doubtless, the royal princes would have been instilled with imperial ideology and obedience to the Empire. Herod the Great sent eight sons to the Roman capital, some lodging at the imperial court (Jacobson 2001, 26 and n. 15). Shortly before the death of Herod in 4 BCE, the future Agrippa I was sent to Rome as a child when he was barely six years old (AJ 18.143–46; D. R. Schwartz 1990, 40–44). It was his privileged upbringing that gave Agrippa I considerable influence at the court of Rome, enabling him to help secure the succession of Claudius, following the murder of Caligula (BJ 2.206–17; AJ 19.236–77; cf. D. R. Schwartz 1990, 91). During his adolescence in Rome, Agrippa II would have had the company of his first cousin, Aristobulus, the son of Herod of Chalcis and the latter’s first wife, Mariamme, who was also sent there (Kokkinos 1998, 309).
- 58 V 359. However, in a letter that Agrippa wrote to Josephus, which is reproduced in the *Vita* (366), he betrays a lack of mastery of literary Greek; see Thackeray 1926, 135 n. a.
- 59 AJ 18.148–49. For biographical details on Herod Antipas, see Jensen 2010; Hoehner 1972.
- 60 (Kushnir)-Stein 1992; SEG 38.1646 = SEG 42.1473 = SEG 43.1076. On the office of *agoranomos*, see Sperber 1977, 227–43.
- 61 (Kushnir)-Stein 1992; cf. Kokkinos 1998, 233 n. 100; Sigismund 2007, 332–33.
- 62 Schürer 1973, 262. Coins were struck at Antioch in the name of Pomponius Flaccus

as Legate in 33/34 CE; see *RPC* 1, nos. 4274–75.

- 63 The meaning of the title *alabarchos* is not certain, but seems to have been applied to a tax administrator in charge of customs (Evans 1995, 590). Alexander the Alabarch, whose full Roman name was probably Gaius Julius Alexander (Evans 1995, 584–86), was the richest man in Alexandria of his generation (*AJ* 20.100), whose enormous wealth is attested by his ability to furnish a loan of 200,000 drachmae to Cyprus, the wife of Agrippa I on his behalf (*AJ* 18.159–60). He also paid for the gates of the Temple in Jerusalem to be adorned with gold and silver (*BJ* 5.205). Alexander was the brother of Philo, the famous Jewish philosopher (*AJ* 18.259), and was also well connected to the imperial House in Rome, serving Antonia Minor, the mother of the future emperor Claudius, as manager of her property in Egypt (*AJ* 19.276–77). Two of his sons rose to prominence, Tiberius Julius Alexander and Marcus Julius Alexander. His high profile presented ever-present dangers: on one occasion, he was held prisoner in Rome by the emperor Gaius Caligula, possibly a consequence of being a member of a rather unwelcome five-man delegation headed by his brother Philo to the emperor in 38/39 CE to plead for the freedom of Jews to practise their monotheistic faith, exemption from participation in the Imperial Cult, and for recognition of their civic rights in Alexandria (*AJ* 18.257–60; 19.276; Philo, *Leg.*, *passim*). For a useful summary of this embassy to Gaius, see Barclay 1996, 55–56; Smallwood 1981, 242–45. On the family of Philo of Alexandria, see Schwartz 2009; Evans 1995; Schürer 1987, 815 n. 14.
- 64 This eldest son, Drusus, must have died shortly thereafter, because Josephus remarks that he did not survive childhood (*AJ* 18.132; Kokkinos 1998, 276).
- 65 Antonia Minor was the daughter of Mark Antony and Octavia (the full sister of Augustus), who had married (Nero Claudius) Drusus, the younger brother of Tiberius and was a protégé of Agrippa I's mother, Berenice. Antonia, as we have mentioned, was also the mother of the emperor Claudius and a grandmother of Caligula.
- 66 *BJ* 2.181; *AJ* 15.344, 18.237, 19.275, 20.138; Dio 59.8.2; Philo, In *Flacc.* 25. On Lysanias and his tetrarchy of Abila (Abilene), north and west of Damascus, see also Mason 2008, 201 n. 1556.
- 67 Philo, In *Flacc.* 40; cf. Kokkinos 1998, 280, Braund 1984, 29.
- 68 Majority opinion, including that of Sartre (2005, 410 n. 215), holds that the principality awarded to Agrippa's brother was the Ituraean territory based around the stronghold of Chalcis sub Libano in the Beqā' Valley, situated roughly midway between Beirut and Damascus, at Majdal Aanjar (Aliquot 1999–2003, 125–37). On the other hand, Kropp (2013b, 29 n. 177) revives and augments the proposal put forward by Jones (1931, 267; cf. Schürer 1973, 573 n. 68) that the statelet in question was located around Chalcis ad Belum, now Qinnasrīn, in northern Syria. According to Stephanus Byzantinus (s.v. Chalcis (4)), the founder of that tetrarchy was one Monimus, the Arab. On the Ituraeans, their history and material remains, see Myers 2010; Aliquot 1999–2003, 161–290; Schürer 1973, 561–73.
- 69 *RPC* 1, no. 4982 = *TJC*, no. 124 (Agrippa I); *RPC* 1, no. 4777 = *TJC*, no. 361 (Herod of Chalcis).
- 70 Kropp points out that the strip cuirass was a standard costume of Hellenistic royal authority and adopted by Roman client kings as their formal garb (Kropp 2013b, 88–90; 2013c).
- 71 Kropp 2013a; 2013b, 38–39; Burnett 2011/14, 88–95.
- 72 Burnett 2011/14, 91–93.
- 73 Burnett 2011/14, 95.
- 74 *RPC* 1, nos. 4983–84 = *TJC*, no. 121,

- 75 Burnett 2011/14, 96–97; 1987, 35–36.
- 76 The sacrifice for the investiture of Agrippa I's grandfather, Herod the Great, as client king of Judaea was indeed held in the precincts of the Capitoline temple (*AJ* 14.388; *BJ* 1.285; cf. Braund 1984, 24–25).
- 77 *AJ* 19.277; Kokkinos 1998, 294. Marcus Julius Alexander is mentioned on Egyptian ostraca and show that his agents were actively engaged in trade, plying between the Nile and ports on the Red Sea, and possibly onward to Arabia, India and east Africa; see *CPJ* 2.419a–e.
- 78 *AJ* 19.355; 20.140. Julius Archelaus was a member of the Herodian royal family, being descended from offspring of Herod's union with the Hasmonaean princess, Mariamme, and also of the king's sister, Salome; see Kokkinos 1998, 192–98 and family tree on p. 205; also, S. Schwartz 1990, 148; Barclay 2007, 37 n. 209.
- 79 *BJ* 2.217, 221; *AJ* 19.277, 288, 20.13, 103, 158; *RPC* 1, nos. 4777–80 = *TJC*, nos. 361–64.
- 80 *IG* 22.3449. Macurdy (1935, 246 n. 2) has deduced the date from the reference in the inscription to 'Tiberius Claudius Theogenes of Paeania' as *epimēlētēs* (administrator) of the city. All known inscriptions mentioning 'Queen Berenice' are included in Appendix A1 ([Sections A1.1.1](#), [A1.1.2](#), and [A1.1.4](#)).
- 81 Tac., *Hist.* 2.2, 2.81; Suet., *Titus* 7.1; *AE* 2006.1578 = *IGLBibbia* 41.
- 82 On C. Vibius Marsus (Roman legate for Syria from 41/42 to 44/45 CE), see Schürer 1973, 263–64.
- 83 *BJ* 2.218–19; 5.147–55; *AJ* 19.326–27; Tac., *Hist.* 5.12. This wall is identified by many scholars, but by no means all, with the Third Wall, that ran approximately 400 m north of the present north wall of the Old City. Remnants of this wall were first excavated by E. L. Sukenik and L. A. Mayer in 1925–27. See the discussion of this topic by D. R. Schwartz (1990, 140–44), who is undecided, and Kokkinos (2015, 95*–99*), who rejects the 'Sukenik-Mayer Wall' as the Third Wall. New supporting evidence in favour of the 'Sukenik-Mayer Wall' as the Third Wall has been furnished in recent excavations in the grounds of the Russian compound, north-west of the present Old City; see Avner and Arbiv 2016.
- 84 Jacobson 2001, 27–30.
- 85 The Rabbinic literature speaks of *Agrippas hamelech* (King Agrippa) without distinguishing unambiguously between father and son, so it is not possible to be entirely sure which of the two Herodian Agrippas this passage refers to (D. R. Schwartz 1990, 158–60). However, this particular incident best suits the character of Agrippa I, as delineated by Josephus. Also, it indicates that this king knew Hebrew, a detail that is also attested by the same historian (*AJ* 18.228), whereas there is no evidence that his son did. The several other references to *Agrippas hamelech* in these late Jewish sources are more difficult to assign and tend to be even more anecdotal, limiting further their historical value. For a discussion of this topic, see S. Schwartz 1990, 160–69.
- 86 On Publius. Petronius and his years as Roman legate for Syria, see Schürer 1973, 263. He struck a coin while serving as legate in Antioch; see *RPC* 1, no. 4276 (41/42 CE).
- 87 Kokkinos 1998, 300–301. The three appointees of Agrippa I for the High Priesthood were Simon Cantheras son of Boethus (*AJ* 19.297, 313), Matthias son of Ananus (*AJ* 19.316) and Elionaeus son of Cantheras (*AJ* 19.342).
- 88 Wilkinson 1974, 50.
- 89 Amit and Gibson 2014.
- 90 Josephus states that Pontius Pilate sequestered funds from the Temple treasury to construct an aqueduct to Jerusalem (*BJ* 2.175–77; *AJ* 18.60–62).

- 91 *Acta Isidori*, recension B, col. 1.18 = *CPJ* 2.156b. The named Alexandrian-Greek protagonists in these papyri fragments are Isidorus and Lampon, who are mentioned together in the prosecution of Flaccus in 38 CE (Philo, *In Flacc.* 125–26, 135). However, the date of the event described in the *Acta Isidori*, a trial before the emperor, and whether the king referred to is Agrippa I or his son and, indeed, whether the text is a documentary record or a work of fiction, are disputed by scholars; see Barclay 1996, 72 n. 51; Smallwood 1981, 250–55; Schürer 1973, 398.
- 92 Haensch 2014, 107; *AE* 2006.1578 = *IGLBibbia* 41; see [Section A1.1.2](#). There is also an honorific inscription at Heliopolis (Baalbek) naming an Agrippa as *patronus coloniae*, that is, of Berytus (Beirut), because Heliopolis was then governed by Berytus (*IGLS* 6.2759 = *CIL* 3.14387). The Agrippa mentioned may be Agrippa I rather than his son; see Kokkinos 1998, 299 and nn. 124 and 125; D. R. Schwartz 1990, 132 n. 101. There is no evidence that Agrippa I or his son made substantial benefactions to Greece, which Herod the Great did on a lavish scale. There is, however, the surviving inscription on a large statue base at Athens, already referred to, expressing gratitude to Agrippa's sister, 'Great Queen Julia Berenice' (*IG* 22.3449). In addition to Berenice, the surviving portion of the Berytus inscription only refers to her father, Agrippa I, and not Agrippa II. A very fragmentary Latin inscription found at Apamea honours a '*Regi magno --- philo[romaeo] (or philo[caesari]) ---*', which would suit either Agrippa I or II for some benefaction to the city (Balty 2000, 473–74 and fig. 9; 1981, 203 no. 16, pl. 225).
- 93 Millar 1990, 12–14.
- 94 Strab. 16.2.9 [752] with Millar 1990, 12.
- 95 *AJ* 19.343–52; Acts 12.19–23; cf. Schürer 1973, 452–53. The spectacles were probably the quadrennial Isactian games which Herod the Great had instituted in Caesarea Maritima on the occasion of its inauguration and dedicated to Augustus; see *BJ* 1.415; *AJ* 16.137–41; cf. Patrich 2009, 187–88; Lämmer 1974. However, Kokkinos (1998, 302) has suggested that the celebrations were held to mark Claudius' return from his campaign in Britain. On the date of Agrippa I's death, see Kokkinos 1998, 378–80, contra D. R. Schwartz 1990, 109–111. His last dated coins are marked (regnal) 'year 8' (*RPC* 1, nos. 4982, 4984, 4986 = *TJC*, nos. 124–26; cf. Burnett 2011/14, 102–104).
- 96 *RPC* 1, no. 4981 = *TJC*, no. 120.
- 97 Dio 60.5.2; Suet., *Claud.* 11.2; Sen., *Apocol.* 9; cf. Grether 1946, 245–46.
- 98 *AJ* 19.354. Herod of Chalcis had been married previously to a cousin named Mariamme, who was descended from Herod the Great through one of his daughters, Olympias, and his younger brother Joseph (*AJ* 18.134). With her, Herod had a son, Aristobulus; he had two further sons with Berenice, called Berenicianus and Hyrcanus (*BJ* 2.221; *AJ* 20.104). It is not known whether Mariamme had been divorced or died before Herod of Chalcis contracted his second marriage to Berenice (Kokkinos 1998, 308).
- 99 *AJ* 19.361–62. The younger Agrippa was only about 17 years old at the time (*AJ* 19.354). Claudius' advisors had reasonable concerns, being cognisant of the volatile situation in Judaea. Not only was much of the Jewish population restive, but at that very moment, the gentile inhabitants of Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste (Samaria) were publicly rejoicing the death of Agrippa I (*AJ* 19.356–59, 361). However, D. R. Schwartz (1990, 149–53) has questioned the pretext used for denying Agrippa II succession to his father's realm.
- 100 *BJ* 2.220. On Cuspius Fadus, see Schürer 1973, 455–56; Kokkinos 2012, 105, 108. Tiberius Julius Alexander, elder son of Alexander the Alabarch, enjoyed a glittering career in the Roman provincial administration (Mason 2008, 181–82 n. 1378; Barclay 1996, 105–106; Barzanò 1988; Schürer 1973, 456–58 with n. 9; Burr 1955;

Turner 1954). In 42 CE, he was appointed *epistratēgos* (literally, ‘over-general’) of the Thebaid in Egypt (Burr 1955, 25–27; on the office of *epistratēgos* in Roman Egypt, see Thomas 1982). From 46/47 to c. 48 CE, Alexander served as Roman governor (*procurator*) of Judaea (AJ 20.100–103). To have qualified for this position, he must have previously been admitted to the Equestrian order. He is next mentioned as a senior officer assigned by Nero in 63 CE to assist General Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo in the Roman campaign against Parthia (Tac., *Ann.* 15.28). By 66 CE, he had achieved the highest office attainable by a member of the Equestrian order, that of governor of Egypt (BJ 2.309). In a twist of irony, this son of an illustrious member of the Alexandrian Jewish community, who had donated precious metals for cladding the gates of the Temple, and nephew of Philo, was obliged to put down a Jewish uprising in that city which was set off in 66 CE by mounting tensions between its Jewish and gentile Greek communities (BJ 2.490–98), and he did so with brutality. In the climactic stage of the Judaeo-Roman War, the siege of Jerusalem, Tiberius Julius Alexander served as ‘Titus’ second-in-command (BJ 5.45–46, 510; 6.237–42). The religious obligations which came with the high positions that he occupied obliged him to abjure his ancestral faith and observe Roman-Egyptian rituals, as attested by surviving inscriptions and papyrus texts (see Barclay 1996, 106 n. 6; cf. AJ 20.100). He is mentioned in three philosophical treatises of Philo (*De Providentia* 1 and 2 and *De Animalibus*) as a young sceptic unwilling to accept the notions of divine providence and justice (Barclay 1996, 105 and nn. 3 and 4).

- 101 For references to Cumanus in ancient sources and about the disorders during his administration, see Kokkinos 2012, 105; Schürer 1973, 458–59. For his dates as Procurator, see also Kokkinos 1998, 319 n. 186.
- 102 Eleazar son of Deinaeus, mentioned by Josephus (BJ 2.235–36, 253; AJ 20.121, 161) is generally identified with the Ben Dinai referred to in the Mishnah as an notorious murderer (*m.Sotah* 9.9) and in Midrashic literature (*Midrash Rabbah on Song of Songs* 2.18), where he is described as someone who tried to bring about the messianic redemption (i.e. liberation) of Israel prematurely; see Hayward 1979, 601 n. 18. These references in Rabbinic sources illustrate that, in Jewish tradition, the rebel leaders tended to be regarded ambivalently as driven by messianic ideals, but behaving as thugs, just as Josephus maintained (see Schürer 1973, 462 n. 29).
- 103 This military formation was founded by Herod the Great. On the ‘Sebastenes’, see Mason 2008, 36 n. 313; Schürer 1973, 363–65.
- 104 The entire episode up to the dismissal of Cumanus by Claudius is recorded in BJ 2.232–46 and AJ 20.118–36. On Ummdius Durmius Quadratus (governor of Syria from 50 to 60 CE), see Mason 2008, 194–95 n. 1494; Schürer 1973, 264. For coins issued in his name as legate in Antioch, see RPC 1, nos. 4284–87 (55/56 CE), 4290–91 (56/57 CE).
- 105 Kokkinos 2012, 85 and n. 3.
- 106 Mason 2016, 240.





4 Agrippa II in his patrimony

In early 49 CE, while Cumanus was governor of Judaea, Claudius

granted Agrippa II Chalcis, the small territory in the Lebanon which had been ruled by his uncle, Herod of Chalcis, until his death a few months earlier (*BJ* 2.223; *AJ* 20.104). Presumably, this territory was not passed down to Herod's own son because the latter was under-aged. It was at this juncture, that Agrippa II also succeeded his uncle as Curator of the Temple of Jerusalem, which gave him control of the High Priesthood. He exercised this authority right up to the outbreak of the revolt in 66 CE (*AJ* 20.213, 222). Agrippa tried to use the opportunity provided by this appointment to foster a harmonious relationship between Judaea and Rome and enhance the prestige of the Jews and their beliefs in the Empire, which his late father had promoted with considerable flair but, instead, through a series of poor decisions, he managed to alienate the Jewish religious establishment and help drive a wedge between the Judean elite and the Roman authorities.¹⁰⁷

It was his acquisition of Chalcis that had entitled Agrippa II to use the royal title and his regnal era ought to have begun at this point, but it was not the era that was employed for dates on his coins or official weights and other inscriptions, such as we have, unless Kushnir-Stein's proposal for an era beginning in 49 CE is accepted.¹⁰⁸ Like his father, Agrippa II styled himself 'great king, friend of Caesar, the pious and friend of the Romans'.¹⁰⁹

In 53 CE, Claudius exchanged Agrippa's small principality of Chalcis for a much larger territory, the former tetrarchy of Philip, comprising Gaulanitis (Golan) inclusive of the districts of Ulatha (Huleh) with Paneas (Banias; *AJ* 15.360), Batanaea and Trachonitis, north and east of Lake Tiberias to which the emperor added Abila, which had belonged to his father along with the other areas (*BJ* 2.247; *AJ* 20.138). We know from elsewhere in Josephus (*BJ* 2.421) that the parcel of eastern territories also included Auranitis (the Ḥawrān/Ḥaurān), which had also formed part of his father's realm (*BJ* 2.215). According to the *Bellum*, the new additions included the 'old tetrarchy of Varus' (*BJ* 2.247), which may refer to Arca (Arcea), although Kokkinos is convinced that Agrippa received Arca only after the Judean-Roman War, in recognition for his loyal support.¹¹⁰ Presumably, the emperor Claudius and his advisors now judged Agrippa to be sufficiently mature and capable of administering a larger kingdom, but not troublesome Judaea. Agrippa now possessed a portion of his father's realm, and also access to additional military personnel, including the Babylonian-Jewish cavalry units, with their mounted archers, which had been settled there by his great-grandfather, Herod the Great (*AJ* 17.23–31).

Agrippa was then 26 years old. At about this time, Agrippa gave his youngest sister, Drusilla, in marriage to Azizus, King of Emesa, after

he had consented to be circumcised.¹¹¹ Her previous suitor, Epiphanes, son of King Antiochus IV of Commagene, had baulked at converting to Judaism and the prospect of circumcision (AJ 20.139–40). Thus, we see that during this early stage of Agrippa's kingship, he continued to follow his father's example of adhering to certain Jewish precepts and insisting that they were also maintained by members of his family.

Following on from Ventidius Cumanus, the next Roman governor of Judaea was Claudius (or Antonius) Felix (52/53–c. 58 CE), brother of Pallas, a trusted advisor of Emperor Claudius; both were freedmen of the imperial family and had risen to equestrian rank.¹¹² Josephus mentions that the High Priest, Jonathan son of Ananus had petitioned Nero in favour of Felix's appointment.¹¹³ The favour, though, was not returned – far from it, as we shall see.

Felix had gained the reputation of a social climber, who is said to have married three queens (Suet., *Claud.* 28). He succeeded in luring Drusilla away from Azizus of Emesa, an act which constituted a violation of Jewish law, all the more so, because we have no evidence that Felix agreed to undergo circumcision (AJ 20.139–44; Acts 24.24). Drusilla's desertion of Azizus occurred shortly before he died (which was sometime between October 54 and October 55 CE). His boast with regard to Drusilla is manifested in the appropriation of the distinctive Herodian royal monogram, a pair of crossed palm branches, for one of his Judaeian coin issues.¹¹⁴ We are told that another wife of Felix was a grand-daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra, and therefore kin of Emperor Claudius, although this report is likely to be incorrect.¹¹⁵ We have no information about who she was, except that Tacitus tells us that her name was also Drusilla.¹¹⁶ The third royal wife of Felix remains a total mystery.

It seems that Agrippa II strongly disapproved of Felix's liaison with his young sister and avoided contact with him as far as possible: no interaction between the two men is recorded by Josephus.¹¹⁷ In any case, Felix was widely regarded as being somewhat obnoxious.¹¹⁸ However, as Kokkinos reminds us, there is a gap in historical information on Judaea from c. 55 to 58 CE.¹¹⁹ Drusilla's decision to take up with Felix may have been partly motivated by the bad blood between her and her sister Berenice, who was always close to her brother.¹²⁰ Berenice and her two younger sons had moved in with Agrippa after the death of her second husband, Herod of Chalcis, in 48/49 CE (AJ 20.104). She was to remain with her brother for over a decade and fulfilled the role of his consort.¹²¹

According to Acts (24.25), Felix was rattled by Paul, who he interviewed while he was incarcerated in Caesarea. Paul had entered into a discourse with the governor about morals, self-control and the

coming judgement, and his sharp reaction is hardly surprising. Drusilla bore Felix a son named Agrippa, who we are told perished with his wife in the volcanic eruption of Vesuvius in 79 CE (*AJ* 20.144). Agrippa's second youngest sister, Mariamme, had been married to Julius Archelaus, son of Alexas Helcias (see n. 78), but that marriage, which produced a daughter called Berenice, did not endure and Mariamme left him for another Jewish partner, Demetrius of Alexandria, reputed to be 'first in birth and wealth' among the Jews of Alexandria, with whom she had a son called Agrippinus.¹²²

During the years of Felix's tenure, Agrippa II continued to demonstrate steadfast obedience to Rome, eschewing the bold gestures of autonomy that his father had orchestrated. He, together with Antiochus IV of Commagene, contributed auxiliaries to a war against Parthia in 54 CE, which occurred early in the reign of Nero (*Tac.*, *Ann.* 13.7). As a reward for his loyal support, Nero, who succeeded Claudius on his death, enlarged Agrippa's kingdom by the grant of the Galilean districts of Tiberias, Tarichaea,¹²³ Bethsaida-Julias,¹²⁴ as well as territory in southern Peraea, probably in about 54/55 CE¹²⁵ (*Figures 4.1–4.3*). According to Kokkinos, this expansion of Agrippa II's kingdom that year was commemorated by the launch of a new era, mentioned in coin and lapidary inscriptions.¹²⁶

The extension of Agrippa's territorial authority southwards to the Peraea was matched by his increased presence in the Judaeian capital on the west side of the River Jordan. Until the outbreak of the War in 66 CE,¹²⁷ we find Agrippa residing for a considerable part of his time in Jerusalem, appointing and dismissing High Priests, extending and upgrading his residence, the old Hasmonaean palace in the Upper City, which was in close proximity to the Temple enclosure, from where he could also oversee building work and repairs on the Sanctuary (*AJ* 20.189; 219; cf. 15.391; *BJ* 5.36). Nero's goodwill towards Agrippa also extended to other members of the Herodian royal house. Thus, the emperor awarded the client kingship of Armenia Minor to Agrippa's first cousin, Aristobulus, the son of Herod of Chalcis (*BJ* 2.252; *AJ* 20.158).

Figure 4.1 View to the south-west, across Lake Tiberias. The town of Tiberias is on the extreme left and Magdala/Tarichaea on the extreme right. Mount Arbel(a) occupies the central background.

Figure 4.2 View of the Jordan valley from the summit of al-Tell (probably Bethsaida-Julias), north of Lake Tiberias. The lake is just visible in the distance to the left.

Figure 4.3 Temple architrave at al-Tell, a leading candidate for Bethsaida-Julias, 1st century CE or later.

Returning to the mercurial Felix, his magic touch eluded him in Judaea. He was wholly unsuccessful at stemming the spiralling disorder. Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.9; *Ann.* 12.54) castigates both Felix and his predecessor, Cumanus, and their maladministration of Judaea, for inflaming the situation there.¹²⁸ Josephus notes that Felix ‘captured and put to death many of (the) imposters [i.e. pseudo-prophets and -messiahs] and brigands ... who infested the country’ (*AJ* 20.160–61), including the troublesome Eleazar son of Deinaeus, and his associates. Eleazar was captured by a ruse and sent to Rome with his comrades for trial (*BJ* 2.253; *AJ* 20.161). He had other brigands crucified and those judged to have been complicit with them were also punished. More serious for Felix was a movement somewhat like the one led by Theudas during the governorship of Cuspius Fadus, in which a man claiming to be a prophet offered his followers a better future by undertaking to lead them to Jerusalem and rid the holy city of Roman control. However, in this case, the charismatic leader is known to us simply as ‘the Egyptian’. We have three different versions of this episode, two given in Josephus and one in the Book of Acts (*BJ* 2.261–63; *AJ* 20.169–72; Acts 21.38), each mentioning different numbers of the adherents of ‘the Egyptian’. They are also at variance as to whether his intention was to stage a violent assault or rely purely on divine intervention. However, Felix regarded the threat against Rome’s authority serious enough to order his heavy infantry to quell the mob that assembled on the Mount of Olives. There were many deaths in that encounter, but ‘the Egyptian’ and some of his followers managed to escape, despite the high alert which reached the apostle Paul, who was himself mistaken by a Roman officer for ‘the Egyptian’.

These efforts at suppression only further inflamed the situation. A new, even more lethal challenge to the authorities arose, represented by the emergence of the *sicarii*, literally dagger-men, who, we are told, went about with *sica* daggers concealed under their robes and mounted surprise attacks on their victims.¹²⁹ Josephus claimed that the ex-High Priest, Jonathan son of Ananus was one of their number. In his case, according to Josephus, it was the Roman governor, Felix who hired the *sicarii* to dispose of Jonathan, because he was riled by the High Priest for hectoring him to ameliorate his administration of Judaea (*AJ* 20.162–64).

Relations between Jewish and gentile communities in the Land of Israel were teetering on the brink during the governorship of Felix, and these tensions were an important factor in the outbreak of the War. Caesarea, with its mixed population, was a major flashpoint (*BJ*

2.266–70; *AJ* 20.173–78). There, the Jewish and gentile inhabitants entered into a spat over the issue of equal civic rights. In skirmishes involving stone-throwing, the Jewish activists first gained the upper hand, but then Felix intervened and, when his summons to them to stop the violence had little effect, he ordered his soldiers to restore law and order. Being mostly drawn from the ‘Syrian’, i.e. gentile, communities of Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste (Samaria), the governor’s militiamen naturally took the side of their kinsmen and carried out a massacre of Jewish residents and looted homes, particularly of the richer members of that community (*AJ* 20.176). After a while, leading Jewish moderates prevailed on Felix to call off his soldiers. The dispute over civic rights continued to fester and so Felix arranged for notables of the two opposing communities to plead their respective cases before Emperor Nero. Strife also plagued the priesthood in Jerusalem provoked, on this occasion, by Agrippa II’s dismissal of Ananias son of Nedebeaus and appointment of Ishmael son of Phiabi as High Priest in c. 59 CE, which touched off violent incidents between the High Priestly class and lower orders of the priesthood.¹³⁰ As the sign of the ensuing turbulence and Agrippa’s inability to restore calm among the priestly hierarchy, over the next seven years a further five High Priests came and went under his watch.¹³¹ We shall see that two of his appointees, Ananus son of Ananus and Jesus son of Gamaliel, joined the rebel leadership in 66 CE.¹³²

It is in this febrile atmosphere, with scenes of angry mobs and subversive bands joined together under oath, that the arrest and detention of Paul by Roman soldiers in Jerusalem took place (*Acts* 22.22–23.22). Upon completion of his third missionary journey through Asia Minor, Macedonia and Greece, Paul arrived in Jerusalem for his final visit in 57 CE. The Book of Acts reports that he was given a warm welcome by James, the brother of Jesus, and his associates. However, his hosts warned him that he had gained a reputation of proselytising among gentiles and repudiating elements of the Jewish faith. He heeded their advice to ritually purify himself in the company of observant Jews and then visit the Temple to carry out traditional devotions under public gaze, so as to dispel the worst of the rumours that he had abandoned the Torah (*Acts* 21.17–26). After spending seven days in Jerusalem, some Jews from the province of Asia (in Western Asia Minor), which he had recently visited, recognised Paul and accused him of defiling the Temple by bringing gentiles into the sacred precincts. Their accusations attracted an angry crowd and he was set upon and dragged out of the Temple. Before Paul could be seriously harmed, a detachment of Roman soldiers came to his rescue, but then handed him over to the Jewish council (*synhedrion*) for

judgement (Acts 21.27–22.30). Having got wind that the members of the council were planning to do away with Paul, a nephew of his reported to the Roman commander in Jerusalem that Paul's life was in jeopardy. Having been made aware that Paul was a Roman citizen, the commander thought it prudent to arrange for the prisoner to appear before the current governor, Felix, and he duly dispatched Paul to Caesarea (Acts 23). There, he was interrogated by the Procurator about his beliefs (Acts 24.10–26). Felix was well informed about the Christian movement, as no doubt he was about many groups identified as subversive by the Roman authorities (Acts 24.22). His Herodian wife, Drusilla, was present on at least one occasion (Acts 24.24). True to form, the venal Felix could not conceal his hope for a bribe from Paul (Acts 24.26).

Porcius Festus (c. 58–c. 60 CE), who succeeded Felix as Procurator, tried to stamp out the lawlessness and clear out the nests of *sicarii*, which had become more widespread and menacing,¹³³ but his life was cut short after only two years in office and before he had much chance get to grips with the unrest (AJ 20.200). In fact, tensions between the Jews and gentiles of Caesarea were ratcheted up during his term in office, when the representatives of the gentile community there offered Beryllus, Nero's tutor and Imperial Secretary, a large bribe to persuade him to annul 'the grant of equal civic rights to the Jews' (AJ 20.183–84), whatever that would have entailed in practice. According to Josephus, this revocation of Jewish rights and privileges intensified inter-communal strife and 'kindled the flames of war'.

When Festus arrived in Judaea to take up his post, Agrippa and his sister, Berenice, hastened to Caesarea to welcome him (Acts 25.13). During their stay in Caesarea Maritima, Festus sought Agrippa's advice regarding the quarrel between the Jewish authorities and Paul, who had been detained in that city for two years, his case having been left in abeyance by Felix (Acts 24.27; 25.14–27). The apostle was asked to present his case before these visiting dignitaries (Acts 26.1). Agrippa and Berenice arrived at the audience chamber in full state, with an entourage of high-ranking officers and prominent citizens (Acts 25.23). Paul welcomed this opportunity to explain to Agrippa the actions and beliefs that had got him into trouble, because he expected the king to be 'expert in all Jewish matters, both our customs and our disputes' (Acts 26.2–3). So, Paul proceeded to brief Agrippa on his background, the events that shaped his faith and his dispute with the Temple authorities (Acts 26.4–23). Festus jocularly remarked to Paul that he must be going mad, to which Paul replied to the contrary, that he was quite sober (Acts 26.24–25). Paul then challenged Agrippa to say whether he believed in the Prophets. The king retorted: 'I know you do' and then with a tinge of irony, 'You think it will not take

much to win me over and make a Christian of me?'.¹³⁴ With these words, Agrippa was probably intimating that he wished to bring the interview to a close. This response might, though, be interpreted in a complimentary sense, as if to mean 'Paul, you almost persuade me to become a Christian'.¹³⁵ The words uttered by Agrippa and reputed use of the term 'Christian' – which was not uttered by Paul, himself, in that interview – hint tantalisingly at his awareness of Christianity as a distinct faith and that he knew more about the embryonic movement. Indeed, it has been suggested that Festus had turned to Agrippa for his guidance on the charges against Paul because he believed that the king was knowledgeable about Jewish doctrinal matters.¹³⁶ Festus had told Agrippa that he needed accurate facts for his report to Nero on this case and that is why he had asked the king to question Paul and advise him on this matter (Acts 25.26). After the interview, Festus and Agrippa retired to talk over the case in private. They agreed that Paul was 'doing nothing that deserves death or imprisonment' and Agrippa added: 'The fellow could have been discharged, had he not appealed to the emperor' (Acts 26.30–32).

While Festus was Procurator, a bitter argument broke out between Agrippa and the Jewish leaders of Jerusalem, which escalated to an extent that their dispute needed to be brought before the Roman Emperor, Nero (AJ 20.189–96). When visiting Jerusalem, it was usual for Agrippa and his sister, Berenice, to reside in the old Hasmonaean palace, which was situated on a lofty site in the Upper City (BJ 2.312, 344, 426; AJ 20.190), commanding a fine view over the city and the Temple Mount. It was located above the *Xystus*, a paved terrace, immediately below the palace and close to the viaduct that spanned the Tyropoeon Valley and led eastwards to the Temple Mount.¹³⁷ Agrippa had decided to raise the height of the palace with the construction of an elevated dining room (*oecus*) so that, it was claimed, he could watch activities in the Temple precincts while reclining at meals. Actually, even from the vantage point of his elevated chamber built above the highest spot on the Western hill, where the Hasmonaean palace is likely to have stood, the tall structure of the Temple Sanctuary, 100 cubits (more than 46 m) high and wide (BJ 5.207; *m.Midd.* 4.6), would have almost completely blocked Agrippa's line of sight to the rituals performed around the Temple altar, which lay on the opposite side of the lofty Sanctuary.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, his alleged eavesdropping annoyed Jerusalem's leaders, who responded by building a high wall above the western portico of the inner Temple to obstruct Agrippa's view of the sacred precincts (AJ 20.191), incidentally confirming that the Hasmonaean palace lay to the west of the Temple enclosure. However, this raised wall also obscured the view of Roman soldiers keeping a close eye on the

worshippers in the Temple from their lookouts above the western portico of the outer enclosure, which bothered Festus no less than it did Agrippa, so Festus ordered the screening wall to be taken down.¹³⁹

This rather senseless dispute escalated, with the Jewish notables reacting by requesting Festus to allow a delegation to be sent to Rome to plead the case before Nero. Accordingly, a ten-strong delegation of notables led by the High Priest, Ishmael son of Phiabi, and Helcias departed for Rome.¹⁴⁰ There, under the influence of his second wife, Poppaea Sabina, who had the reputation of being sympathetic to the Jews (*AJ* 20.195), Nero ruled in their favour and allowed the obstructing wall to remain, although Poppaea ordered Ishmael and Helcias to be detained within the confines of her quarters in Rome.¹⁴¹ Now being held abroad, the incumbent High Priest was obliged to relinquish his office and Agrippa had him replaced by Joseph Cabi, son of Simon Cantheras, who had previously held the High Priesthood.¹⁴² This Joseph son of Simon may be the same individual who was sent to take command at Jericho at the beginning of the War in 66 CE (*BJ* 2.567). The affair of the dining room provides clear evidence of the chasm that had deepened between much of the Jerusalem élite and Agrippa and, indeed, the Herodian dynasty as a whole. The rift had begun with the appointment of Herod the Great by the Romans and had been exacerbated by Herod's raising of a golden eagle above the 'great gate' of the Temple in Jerusalem and the retribution meted out to the pious young men who had cut down the offending object (*BJ* 1.648–55). Agrippa I had been largely successful in healing the breach with the Jewish traditionalists but his son's poor judgement and lack of tact, certainly when it came to deeply conservative Jews, greatly impaired his ability to control or influence events during the War. It fatally compromised his powers of persuasion and ability to exert a restraining influence on even the more pragmatic Jewish groups and halt the downward drift to war with Rome.

Festus' successor was Luceius Albinus (c. 60–63/64 CE).¹⁴³ Before Albinus was able to take up his post, Agrippa II used his authority over the Temple and its administration to remove Joseph Cabi and confer the High Priesthood on Ananus son of Ananus.¹⁴⁴ Josephus presents a contradictory picture of Ananus, possibly a result of drawing on two different documentary sources. In the *Antiquitates* (20.199) this Ananus is described as a strict Sadducee, pointing to that sect's lack of compassion. However, in the *Bellum* (4.319–25) Josephus presents him as a greatly revered elder, a man of the highest integrity, a lover of liberty and a believer in democracy, who put public welfare above his private interests.¹⁴⁵ Then again, Ananus son of Ananus is held responsible for taking advantage of the interregnum between

governors to convene a council of judges (*synhedrion kritōn*), hauling before it James, the brother of Jesus, and some others to trial for transgressing the Law and sentencing them to stoning (AJ 20.200; cf. Euseb., *HE* 2.23.12–18). According to the account of this episode about James in the *Antiquitates*, the authenticity of which is not universally accepted, fair minded and strictly observant residents of Jerusalem, who were outraged by these actions, secretly petitioned Agrippa to restrain Ananus from taking further harsh measures of this sort. Some citizens went to meet Albinus, while the new governor was en route from Alexandria to Judaea and complained to him that Ananus had no right to convene the *synhedrion* without the governor's consent. Albinus expressed his displeasure to Ananus and Agrippa took the expedient of deposing him from the High Priesthood after just three months in office, replacing him with Jesus (Yeshua) son of Damnaeus (AJ 20.201–203).

Much to the ire of the priestly establishment, which saw itself as the guardian of ancestral laws and traditions, Agrippa intervened in favour of the Levites who had petitioned him to convene a *synhedrion* to sanction their wearing linen robes on equal terms with the priests (AJ 20.216–18). The Levites had flattered the king by suggesting that it would represent an innovation for which he would be remembered. For many, this concession was viewed as a serious travesty of Jewish ancestral laws by Agrippa, which further alienated him from the Jerusalem priesthood and most of the Jewish public.

Albinus tried hard to restore order by attempting to suppress the *sicarii* (AJ 20.204). However, according to Josephus, his efforts in that direction were undermined by his readiness to take bribes (AJ 20.205). During a religious festival in c. 60 CE, some *sicarii* entered Jerusalem and kidnapped the secretary of Eleazar, the Captain of the Temple and son of Ananias son of Nedebaeus, a former High Priest, holding him to ransom for the release of ten of their number, who were being held in prison.¹⁴⁶ Desperate to get his son released, the High Priest prevailed on Albinus to agree to the exchange. The success of their extortion emboldened the *sicarii* to kidnap members of Ananias' protégés until more of their comrades were freed. Their numbers multiplied and they 'proceeded to harass every part of the land'. Albinus completed his term as governor by clearing out the prisons, executing those judged guilty of serious crimes and releasing others convicted of lesser offenses for a personal bribe, thereby adding to the number of brigands on the loose (AJ 20.215). Albinus then obtained a posting to another former client kingdom, Mauretania, where he got caught up in the power struggle for succession to Nero, which resulted in his downfall and demise (Tac., *Hist.* 2.58–59).

With Berenice continuing to lodge with her brother, gossip spread

far and wide that Agrippa and his sister were cohabiting in an incestuous relationship (*AJ* 20.145; *Juv., Sat.* 6.155–59). It was in an effort to scotch the rumour that Berenice induced King Polemo II of Cilicia Trachaea to marry her (*AJ* 20.145–46). This marriage to Polemo probably took place in 63 CE, after he had been dispossessed of Pontus, but this union did not last more than a year.¹⁴⁷ As a precondition for that marriage, the groom was obliged to undergo circumcision and convert to Judaism, to which Polemo assented, although not joyfully. Berenice was back with her brother, by 65 CE at the very latest.¹⁴⁸

During the governorship of Albinus (probably in 60/61 CE), Agrippa renamed his capital, Caesarea Philippi¹⁴⁹ as Neronias, in honour of his imperial master, and enlarged it (*AJ* 20.211; *BJ* 3.514). This new name is attested on coins of Agrippa minted in the reign of Nero, three of which feature a portrait of the emperor.¹⁵⁰ Agrippa marked this event with the institution of a second era, as previously mentioned. According to Kokkinos, it represented Agrippa's response to Nero's celebration of the first shaving of his beard and commencement of Neronian games in Rome.¹⁵¹ It may also be read as a gesture of appreciation of the confidence placed in Agrippa by Nero as client monarch through the substantial extension of his kingdom.¹⁵² The name Neronias did not last, for immediately following Nero's demise in 68 CE, the Roman Senate proclaimed a *damnatio memoriae* on him, which, *inter alia*, required all honours and awards that had been bestowed on that last Julio-Claudian emperor to be expunged.

In any case, Agrippa's dated coins and inscriptions encompass two eras, set five years apart, one believed to have begun in 55/56 CE, as already mentioned, and the second, five years later in 60/61 CE; see also [Section A2.1](#). The starting dates for these two eras of Agrippa II were broadly accepted by the authors of *RPC* 1 and 2, although they are not so certain about the occasions that gave rise to them. Both eras pertain to the period of Agrippa's reign following his exchange of the principality of Chalcis for parcels of territory that formerly had been ruled by his father, Agrippa I, and great-grandfather, Herod the Great.

The site of Panias (Banias) lies immediately below one of the principal sources of the River Jordan, where a grotto over the spring was a considered sacred to Pan and venerated from the Hellenistic period, if not earlier, and developed into a complex of shrines, where other deities were also worshipped.¹⁵³ The associated settlement grew to the south, below the cliffs that overhang the spring of the River Banias and cave of Pan and on higher ground to the east and north-west. In addition, the existing cultic complex was complemented by a temple dedicated to Augustus and the Imperial Cult, built by Herod the Great in or close to the town, one of three such *Augusteae*

constructed in his kingdom.¹⁵⁴ Herod had acquired the site when Augustus awarded him the territories east and north-east of Lake Tiberias, following the death of the Ituraean tetrarch, Zenodorus (*BJ* 1.398–400; *AJ* 15.344–49, 359–60, 16.271). At the death of Herod the Great, these same territories passed to one of his sons, Philip the Tetrarch, who chose Paneas as his capital and, in 3/2 BCE he refounded the town as Caesarea Philippi.¹⁵⁵ After Philip died in 37 CE, Caesarea Philippi, along with his other domains passed to his nephew, Agrippa I, and in 53 CE, the town was included with the territories that were awarded to Agrippa II, and there he established his capital. Being presided over by its grotto and sanctuaries to Pan and the Imperial Cult close by, Caesarea Philippi possessed the character of a pagan religious centre, which no doubt rubbed off on the image of Agrippa and his royal court.

The remains of Caesarea Philippi from the early Roman period have been investigated by archaeologists.¹⁵⁶ Within the area of the town, the archaeologists uncovered substantial parts of the southern range of an enormous palace, measuring some 115 m in length from east to west and occupying an area of the order of 40,000 sq. m ([Figure 4.4](#)). It is believed that the palace comprised four ranges, built around a central courtyard. This magnificent complex has been dated to the latter half of the 1st century CE and is therefore believed to be the one built by Agrippa II, although it was probably begun by Philip the Tetrarch.¹⁵⁷ The palace was built on a commanding natural terrace, bounded on the west by the gorge furrowed by the fast-flowing Hermon stream from the nearby springs and on the south by the gorge of the Sa'ar rivulet, which drains into the Hermon stream. Judging by the south range, with its façade on its south side, which included two entrances, each flanked by semi-circular bastions, the design of entire palace followed a symmetrical scheme. It is entirely Roman in its architectural concept and method of construction, with its use of arches, barrel vaulting, fine ashlar masonry with proper marble veneering and sophisticated hydraulic installations.¹⁵⁸ There are the remains of large underground vaults carried on round arches. The complex, which included an upper storey, contained a large rectangular hall, which may have been the *aula regia* (audience hall). Integrated into the palace were pools fed with water from the springs in underground channels and discharging into the Sa'ar gorge. The eastern side of the palace was lined by a row of vaulted chambers (seen in the background in [Figure 4.4](#)) which served as *horrea* (warehouses), reminiscent of the battery of storehouses abutting Herod the Great's northern palace at Masada. They are well preserved, probably owing to their utilitarian function, which continued after the palace was abandoned. Running north-to-south to the west of the

palace was found the paved *cardo maximus* of Caesarea Philippi, a broad avenue flanked by colonnades, which ran from the southern gate to a large plaza in front of the sanctuary and grotto of Pan. Situated there are the remnants of a colonnaded building, which was probably a nymphaeum. The residential quarters to the east and north-west of the town centre were situated at a higher elevation than the sacred spring and supplied with water from a separate source, situated to the east of Banias via a 4 km long aqueduct which ran partly along the ground and partly underground; this installation has been dated to the reign of Agrippa II.¹⁵⁹

Figure 4.4 View of the remains of Agrippa II's palatial complex at Caesarea Philippi (Paneas/Banias).

Following the example of his father, Agrippa made lavish benefactions to Berytus, including a theatre, which may simply have been an upgrade to the one sponsored by his father, and subsidised extravagant annual spectacles there.¹⁶⁰ At the same time, he adorned the city with statues, including replicas of famous ancient sculptures.¹⁶¹ If that were not generous enough, Agrippa also paid for distributions of grain and olive oil to the citizens of Berytus. Josephus notes that Agrippa's hard-pressed subjects viewed this munificence with considerable resentment, believing it to have been at their expense. His subjects accused him of 'stripping them of their possessions to adorn a foreign city' (AJ 20.212).

Agrippa's involvement in the affairs of Jerusalem extended beyond the Temple to the welfare of its population. The major building work on the Temple had been completed by 63 CE, which may be viewed as a tribute to Agrippa's dedication to that task, and the sizeable workforce of day labourers who had been engaged on that project was to be laid off (AJ 20.219). As Kokkinos has pointed out, that year was probably a bad time for a rise in unemployment as it followed a Sabbatical year when fields lay fallow and food supplies would have been running short.¹⁶² The labourers who were being made redundant urged Agrippa to sanction, and presumably fund, further building work on the Temple complex by raising the height of the ancient eastern portico ('Solomon's Portico'). The king refused to give a commitment for that undertaking, which would have required a substantial budget for what he considered to be non-essential building activity. Moreover, a significant proportion of the funding would have to be found upfront to pay for the labour.¹⁶³ Instead, he sanctioned a less costly project to pave some of the streets of Jerusalem (AJ 20.222). It transpired that shortly thereafter, essential remedial work was required on the Temple, to underpin the Sanctuary and

counteract subsidence (*BJ* 5.36; *AJ* 15.391). It was also decided to simultaneously raise the height of the Sanctuary by an additional 20 cubits. For this purpose, Agrippa II had ordered immense beams of cedar-wood from Mount Lebanon at considerable cost, but the outbreak of the War interrupted this work and instead these beams were purloined for constructing engines of war (*BJ* 5.36; *AJ* 15.391).

Agrippa also maintained his tight control over the appointment of High Priests. He saw fit to depose his previous appointee, Jesus son of Damnaeus, and chose, in his stead, Jesus son of Gamaliel (*AJ* 20.213). It did not take long for Agrippa to decide to strip Jesus son of Gamaliel of the High Priesthood and to confer the post on Matthias son of Theophilus (*AJ* 20.223). When Jesus son of Damnaeus was replaced, the partisans of the incoming and outgoing High Priests collected bands of supporters, who attacked one another with stones (*AJ* 20.213). The successful use of bribes by the supporters of Ananias son of Nedebeaus to enhance their standing with the authorities must have added to popular resentment. It has been aptly stated that Agrippa's frequent replacement of High Priests after the dismissal of Ananias 'indicates the continuing religio-political tension and the king's inability to deal with it'.¹⁶⁴ Certainly, the instability in the administration of the High Priesthood is symptomatic of his difficulty in asserting his authority over the Jewish leadership. These interventions by Agrippa did even more harm than that because they exacerbated existing tensions and created new ones. We see this same weakness and indecisiveness of Agrippa in his loss of control of parts of his kingdom at the outbreak of the War and having to rely on Roman troops to restore the breakaway areas to his authority.

Despite some unpopular interventions by Agrippa in the affairs of the Temple, he and his sister Berenice made some effort to gain the approbation of the Jewish public by conspicuously observing Jewish religious traditions, as their father had done. It was mentioned previously that Agrippa II obliged Azizus of Emesa and Polemo of Cilicia Trachaea to submit to circumcision before he would consent to their marriages to two of his sisters. Furthermore, Berenice, who had gained a rather tarnished reputation, undertook a Nazirite vow as an act of ritual purification, described in the Bible, and expiation after recovering from some malady.¹⁶⁵ That Jewish custom required the person discharging the vow to refrain from cutting their hair and abstain from alcohol and for 30 days. The ritual ended with a shaving of hair that had grown during the period of abstinence and then performing sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem (*BJ* 2.313–14; *m.Nazir.* 1.3, 2.4, 3.1, 6; Num. 6.1–21).

For all his shortcomings, Albinus was said to be 'a paragon of virtue' compared to his successor, Gessius Florus (63/64–66 CE), in whose

term of office the War broke out.¹⁶⁶ There is ample testimony that Florus goaded the Jews into rebellion: 'Still the Jews' patience lasted until Gessius Florus became Procurator; in his time war began' (Tac., *Hist.* 5.10). Josephus concurred that it was Florus who precipitated the War (*AJ* 20.257). He elaborates:

The crimes of Albinus were, for the most part, perpetrated in secret and with dissimulation; Gessius, on the contrary, ostentatiously paraded his outrages upon the nation, and, as though he had been sent as hangman of condemned criminals, abstained from no form of robbery or violence ... To make gain out of individuals seemed beneath him: he stripped whole cities, ruined entire populations, and almost went the length of proclaiming throughout the country that all were at liberty to practice brigandage, on condition that he received his share of the spoils.

(*BJ* 2.277–78)

Florus' avarice was tinged with a distinct aversion and contempt for the Jews, probably imbibed from the cultural milieu in which he grew up, namely that of the town of Clazomenae in Ionia, the sort of vintage Hellenic environment that was a habitual breeding ground for anti-Semitism.¹⁶⁷ From his Latin name, either Gessius Florus was an imperial freedman, like Felix before him, or possibly was of Italian descent. By an irony of fate, Florus owed his appointment as governor to the influence of his wife, Cleopatra, with Poppaea, the consort of Nero who, as we have seen, had the reputation of being favourably disposed to the Jews (*AJ* 20.195, V 16).

The reputation of Florus, and to some extent Albinus, for rapaciousness may have had to do at least as much with the harsh taxation imposed on the provinces of the Roman Empire by the emperor Nero in the 60s CE in response to a financial crisis that had descended as with their personal avarice.¹⁶⁸ This state of affairs was also largely responsible for the rebellion that broke out in Britain, led by Boudica, queen of the Iceni in c. 60 CE.¹⁶⁹ Nero's financial woes were brought on partly by the crippling expense of his war with Parthia over the Armenian succession (58–63 CE; Tac., *Ann.* 15.1–18), the rebuilding of Rome after the disastrous fire (64 CE), an ambitious public building programme and by his reckless profligacy.¹⁷⁰ His hugely expensive vanity projects included his vast palace, the *Domus Aurea*, in Rome and vain attempt to excavate a canal across the isthmus of Corinth.¹⁷¹

Lawlessness in Judaea multiplied and civil society headed towards breakdown (*BJ* 2.278–79; *AJ* 20.255–56). Josephus writes with hindsight that Florus saw the prospect of war as an opportunity to cover up his own enormities and escape the possibility of being brought to trial for his serious crimes against the Jewish nation (*BJ* 2.282–83).

While Florus was deliberately provoking the Jewish population of Judaea, Agrippa II appears to have remained aloof. At that critical juncture, his intervention to defuse tensions and deal with the abuses committed by the governor might have helped to cool tempers and the appetite for war. Perhaps his earlier scrapes with the priestly establishment had discouraged him from taking the initiative. When, at length, he made an attempt to remonstrate with the inhabitants of Jerusalem to desist from violent conflict, his plea was inadequate and far too late.

The tense atmosphere towards the end of Florus' tour of duty in Judaea is illustrated by the confrontation between Roman legate for Syria, Gaius Cestius Gallus,¹⁷² and the Jewish crowd which gathered around him when he visited Jerusalem at Passover in the company of Florus in 66 CE (*BJ* 2.280–83). The petitioners complained about the Procurator for his oppressive behaviour. Gallus managed to mollify them by promising that Florus would moderate his behaviour in the future. However, the restored calm, such as it was, did not last long.

In this fraught situation, even a small, local dispute could easily flare into full-blown violence. Such dangers were ever-present in cities with mixed populations, such as Caesarea Maritima. This is exactly how the conflict unfolded. It grew out of a quarrel between the Jewish and the Greek-speaking pagan inhabitants of Caesarea towards the end of the governorship of Felix over the issue of civic rights (*BJ* 2.266–70; *AJ* 20.173–78). The Jews maintained that, as Caesarea Maritima had been founded by Herod the Great who was a member of their faith, they ought to have precedence in the city.¹⁷³ The local non-Jewish leaders countered that before Herod's time, the town had existed as Strato's Tower and was then entirely gentile (*AJ* 20.173). Besides, if Herod's Caesarea Maritima had been intended as a Jewish city, Herod would not have erected pagan temples and statues there (*BJ* 2.266). The city's magistrates tried to stop this war of words by arresting the ringleaders of the rival parties, but to little avail (*BJ* 2.269; *AJ* 20.174). Next, the governor Felix decided to send notables of the two parties to present their suits to Nero for arbitration (*BJ* 2.270). The emperor decided in favour of the gentile petitioners and they were awarded the right to govern Caesarea Maritima on their own (*BJ* 2.284). This result inevitably reinforced the conviction of many Jews that Rome was fundamentally hostile towards their nation.

The incident that unleashed the dogs of war in 'the twelfth year of the Principate of Nero and the seventeenth of the reign of Agrippa' (in the spring of 66 CE), began with an attempt by the Jews of Caesarea city to purchase a plot of land adjoining their synagogue from its gentile proprietors, offering a much-inflated price. What was intended as a conciliatory move set off an unpleasant chain of events (*BJ*

2.284–91). The proprietors responded by provocatively building workshops on their plot, leaving only a very narrow access passage to the synagogue for its congregation. However, before the building work reached an advanced stage, some Jewish activists tried to obstruct it. The governor, Gessius Florus, intervened to put a stop to the violence that broke out. Then, the Jewish notables offered Florus the sum of eight talents of silver to have the workshop construction curtailed. The Procurator gladly accepted the bribe, but then left for Sebaste (Samaria), leaving the rival groups to fight it out. On the following day, which was a Sabbath, Jewish worshippers arriving at the synagogue encountered some gentile provocateurs enacting a parody of Jewish Temple ritual, by staging a sacrifice of birds on a chamber pot.¹⁷⁴ This contemptuous display provoked violence between members of the rival communities, although Jucundus, the cavalry officer who was left by Florus to deal with the situation in his absence, had the good sense to remove the chamber pot and he endeavoured to calm the situation. However, rather than taking his cue from Jucundus, Gessius Florus ordered the arrest of members of a Jewish delegation from Caesarea Maritima, who had visited him in Sebaste to press their case, perhaps because they had reminded him, albeit gently, about the eight talents that he had received earlier. His ostensible pretext for detaining them was their removal of their own Torah scrolls, which they had done as a precaution to put them out of harm's way (*BJ* 2.292).

Shortly afterwards, Florus, the habitual extortioner, demanded 17 talents (442 kg) of silver from the Temple treasury on the grounds that the Jews had fallen behind in their payment of tribute to Caesar (*BJ* 2.293–94). Feeling that they had now reached the end of their tether, a large body of Jews congregated in the Temple where they invoked the name of Caesar, imploring him to release them from the tyranny of Florus. Some of them cursed the Procurator and cynically passed around a begging basket, soliciting small change to give this avaricious governor. These insults only spurred him on and he responded by leading a military detachment to Jerusalem on a punitive expedition (*BJ* 2.294–96). On the following day, the eminent citizens of the Holy city went out to meet the troops with acclamations and tried to mollify Florus. They remonstrated with him to overlook the few hotheads who had insulted him, for the sake of the many innocent city folk, and to help restore peace and tranquillity. Florus lodged in Herod's palace on the west side of the Upper City and the next day had a tribunal set up in front of it.¹⁷⁵ The chief priests, the nobles and the most eminent citizens presented themselves before the governor (*BJ* 2.297–304). He ignored their entreaty and ordered his troops to rampage through the upper agora

(in the Upper City), where they massacred civilians indiscriminately. Many innocent residents, men, women and children and some members of the most distinguished families were hauled before the tribunal, where they were summarily tried and condemned to death. For a substantial number, their terrible ordeal involved being scourged and crucified, the punishment usually reserved for slaves (*BJ* 2.305–308).

While this killing spree was taking place, Agrippa was away in Alexandria to offer his congratulations to Tiberius Julius Alexander on his appointment as Prefect of Egypt by Nero.¹⁷⁶ Tiberius Julius Alexander was formerly connected to Agrippa family-wise through the marriage of his younger brother, Marcus Julius Alexander, to Berenice (*AJ* 19.277). As we have seen, Tiberius Julius Alexander had earlier served as governor of Judaea. Berenice happened to be in Jerusalem at that time, fulfilling her Nazirite vow, mentioned earlier. There she witnessed the outrages being perpetrated by Florus' soldiers. She urgently sent her cavalry commanders and bodyguards to Florus to implore him to put a stop to the carnage, but he turned a deaf ear to her earnest entreaties. Berenice appeared barefoot as a penitent Nazirite before the tribunal and made an appeal before Florus,¹⁷⁷ but he paid scant regard and, sensing that her own life was threatened, she beat a hasty retreat to her abode in the city, the Hasmonaeen palace, where she could count on the protection of her royal guards (*BJ* 2.310–14). Then the city notables and chief priests appealed to the inhabitants to desist from provoking Florus and his Roman soldiers. The multitude complied out of respect to them and hoping that Florus might put a stop to the excesses (*BJ* 2.316–17).

Not content with this gesture of restraint, Florus then demanded that the populace demonstrate proof of their peaceful intentions by going out and greeting fresh detachments of two Roman cohorts which were arriving from Caesarea Maritima (*BJ* 2.318). The Jewish leadership took heed and arranged for these soldiers to be welcomed. At the same time, Florus gave instructions that, if the crowds made any derogatory remarks, the soldiers were to respond with force. Reacting to previous atrocities committed by the Roman troops, the more hard-line elements were intent on refusing to co-operate (*BJ* 2.319–20). However, after the priests and Levites earnestly implored the Judaeen populace not to provoke the Romans into acts which would inevitably result in wholesale destruction, they climbed down and approached the troops with courtesy. The cohorts did not respond, so those inclined to rebellion cursed Florus, giving the troops the excuse to mount a fierce attack on the crowds, which were corralled and some individuals were crushed to death (*BJ* 2.321–28). The Jews fought back with vigour and forced the Roman troops to

beat a retreat. Fearing that Florus would return with reinforcements and launch another attack, the Jewish rebels broke down the porticos connecting the Antonia fortress (which housed the Roman garrison of Jerusalem) with the Temple compound to deter a Roman assault on the Sanctuary.¹⁷⁸ Seeing the determination of the militants to resist his efforts to cower the Jewish population, Florus withdrew from Jerusalem to Caesarea Maritima with most of the troops. He delegated the responsibility for maintaining law and order to the local Jewish leadership, leaving behind a cohort at its request (*BJ* 2.329–32).

Following this violent incident, three reports were sent to Cestius Gallus, the Roman legate for Syria and senior of Florus in the provincial administration. The one dispatched by Florus accused the Jews of insurrection and held them responsible for the disorder. The other two reports, submitted by the magistrates of Jerusalem and by Berenice detailed the outrages perpetrated on the city's inhabitants by Florus. Taking advice from his officers, Gallus decided first to dispatch the military tribune (*chiliarchos*) Neapolitanus to Jerusalem in the early summer of 66 CE to learn which, if any, of the reports were reliable, also to gauge the mood of the city's population and check whether it was remaining obedient to Rome.¹⁷⁹ En route, at Jamnia, Neapolitanus met up with King Agrippa, who was returning from Alexandria and briefed him on his mission. The chief priests, the leading citizens and the members of the Judaeian council (*boulē*) also turned up at Jamnia. They paid their respects to Agrippa and then described the brutalities committed by Florus (*BJ* 2.333–36). The king's reaction was predictable:

Agrippa was indignant at their narrative, but diplomatically turned his resentment upon the Jews whom at heart he pitied, wishing to humiliate their pride and, by appearing to disbelieve that they had been at all ill-treated, to divert them from revenge. They indeed, being men of position, being owners of property desirous of peace, understood the benevolent intention of the king's reprimand.

(*BJ* 2.337–38)

Viewed in the light of Josephus' resolve in the *Bellum* to cast Agrippa II in a favourable light, here he is putting a positive spin on the king's contemptuous behaviour towards the Jewish notables and, if his report is at all faithful, their response to him shows remarkable forbearance.

Citizens of Jerusalem, including the widows of victims of Florus' cruelty, went out to welcome Agrippa and Neapolitanus, making clear their distress. On arriving in the city, the two were shown the upper agora which had been the scene of the recent atrocities and the houses that had been looted. Neapolitanus was encouraged by his Jewish

escorts and Agrippa that it was safe for him to tour the city with a single attendant and he was made to appreciate that the hostility of the population was directed at Florus and not towards the Romans in general, to whom they remained loyal. He convened a meeting with the local inhabitants in the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple, commended them for their loyalty to Rome and urged them to keep the peace. He also used the opportunity to express his devotion to the Jewish Sanctuary from beyond the balustrade (*soreg*) demarcating the sacred area of the Temple Mount, which was out-of-bounds to gentiles. Afterwards, he departed to render his account to Cestius Gallus (*BJ* 2.339–41).

It seems that the Jewish populace was left with the impression that the representations made to Cestius Gallus' tribune would not lead to effective remedial action being taken, because they turned to Agrippa and the chief priests, urging them to send a delegation to Nero to denounce Florus and not to allow such a dreadful massacre to pass unheeded in Rome, while leaving the Jews under suspicion of blame for the disorder. Agrippa felt loth to lodge a complaint against a Roman governor before the emperor. On the other hand, he realised the risks of doing nothing and allowing the discontent to smoulder. He therefore decided to make a direct appeal to the populace for restraint in a speech that he delivered at the *Xystus*, the open area adjoining the Hasmonaean palace. Agrippa's sister, Berenice was present while he spoke, seated on the roof of the building (*BJ* 2.342–44). This event must have taken place sometime in the summer of 66 CE, that is, between early June and early August 66 CE.¹⁸⁰

¹⁰⁷ On Agrippa's record as a mediator between the Jews and Rome, see Wilker 2007, 205–318.

¹⁰⁸ Burnett 2007, 318. Kushnir-Stein (2002b) postulated three concurrent coin eras for Agrippa II, beginning 49, 54 and 60 CE for the purpose of resolving so-called 'anachronistic' issues, where Flavian emperors seem to appear posthumously on coins of Agrippa II accompanied by their titulatures. Her postulate of an era beginning in 49 CE pertained to those of Agrippa's coins marked years 26–30 (which would correspond to 74/75–78/79 CE). By then, Chalcis had long since been allocated to his cousin, Aristobulus son of Herod of Chalcis to rule, as Kokkinos (2003, 178) points out. See the discussion of Agrippa's eras in [Section A2.1](#).

¹⁰⁹ *Basileus megas philokaisar eusebēs kai philorōmaios*: *IGLS* 16.270, *SEG* 7.216, *SEG* 7.217. *Basileus megas* also appears in *IGLS* 16.642, *IGLS* 15.103, *SEG* 7.218; see Schürer 1973, 475 n. 15. Agrippa I was the first Herodian king to bear the title *basileus megas* in formal inscriptions; Josephus, though, uses this term once to describe Herod 'the Great' (*AJ* 18.130). The other epithets attached to both Agrippas were those widely endorsed by client kings of Rome. *Philokaisar* ('friend of Caesar') and *philorōmaios* ('friend of Rome') acknowledged their client status; see, e.g. Braund 1984, 105–108; Veligianni 2001, 67–70; Schürer 1973, 452 n. 42. These titles were borne by their forebear, Herod the Great, together with the fairly usual

epithet *eusebēs* (the pious) (Marshak 2015, 155–56 and nn. 20–22). They are encountered on the coins of Agrippa I (*RPC* 1, nos. 4979, 4982–84) as well as on the inscriptions assembled in Appendix A1.

110 Kokkinos 1998, 320, 329. The Varus mentioned here may be the same individual as Noarus (*BJ* 2.481–83; see Mason 2001, 52 n. 291). Josephus describes Noarus as ‘a descendant of Soemus (sic!), who had been a tetrarch of Libanus’ (V 52). According to Schürer (1973, 472 n. 7), his father was none other than Sohaemus, a near-contemporary of Agrippa I, who at the end of 38 CE, obtained from Caligula ‘the land of the Ituraean Arabs ... his ancestral domain’ (Dio 59.12.2), which territory he governed until his death in 49 CE (Tac., *Ann.* 12.23), when it was incorporated into the province of Syria. M. Wilcox (in Schürer 1973, 569) and Sartre (2005, 77) have suggested that the tetrarchy of Varus’ forebear was Arca (Arcea), centred on the site of Tell Arqa, northeast of Tripoli in Lebanon, which Agrippa II was later given to rule. This Sohaemus bequeathed part of his territory to his relative, Noarus/Varus, which the latter held until Claudius transferred it to Agrippa (*BJ* 2.247). Since Agrippa received this and the other territories mentioned in Claudius’ 13th year, after ruling over Chalcis for four years (*AJ* 20.138), these acquisitions must be dated towards the end of 53 CE. So, it is reasonable to suppose that Varus retained a portion of Sohaemus’ tetrarchy for the four years, 49–53 CE, after the bulk of his tetrarchy had reverted to Rome (see Wilcox in Schürer 1973, 570; Mason 2001, 53–54 n. 305). The predecessor of Varus/Noarus could not possibly have been Sohaemus I, the client king of Emesa, who belonged to a later generation, gaining the royal title in c. 54 CE, on the death of his brother, Azizus (*AJ* 20.158; cf. Barrett 1977; Sullivan 1977c, 216–18). However, his very name indicates that he was related to Emesan royalty (Sartre 2005, 77 n. 180). Emesa was a landlocked city-state, situated on the Orontes River in Syria, but not far from Arca to the north-east. The emergence of Emesa and its ruling dynasty is discussed in Millar 1993, 300–303. Sohaemus I participated with his auxiliaries in Cestius Gallus’ unsuccessful expedition to Jerusalem to quash the Judean insurgency and in the follow-up campaign by Vespasian and Titus (*BJ* 2.500–501; 3.68).

111 *AJ* 20.139; Kokkinos 1998, 321; Sullivan 1977c, 215–16.

112 *BJ* 2.137; *AJ* 20.247; Tac., *Hist.* 5.9; Suet., *Claud.* 28. Cf. Mason 2008, 199–200 n. 1546; Schürer 1973, 459–66; Kokkinos 2012, 105–106; 1990. Haensch (2014, 112–13) has argued that the *nomen* of Felix was Antonius, but Kokkinos’ evidence for Claudius is more convincing. For the dates of Felix and the three subsequent Procurators of Judaea, see also Kokkinos 1998, 385–86.

113 *AJ* 20.162. On Jonathan son of Ananus, High Priest from 36 to 37 CE (appointed and deposed by Lucius Vitellius, the Roman legate for Syria, from 35 to 39 CE, and father of the future emperor), see Mason 2008, 195 n. 1500; Schürer 1979, 230.

114 Jacobson 2014.

115 Tac., *Hist.* 5.9. The male children of Mark Antony and Cleopatra all died before reaching child-bearing age and their only daughter that is attested was Cleopatra Selene, who married Juba II of Mauretania, but she was deceased by 5 BCE. Felix’ spouse of this royal line therefore would have been a daughter of Cleopatra Selene (Roller 2003, 251–52). The existence of at least one daughter of the Mauretanian royal couple is attested by an honorific inscription in Athens, but the name is missing from what remains of it (*IG* 2².3439).

116 Of course, Tacitus may have muddled up the name of that spouse with that of Agrippa’s sister.

117 Goodman 1987, 148; Smallwood 1981, 273.

118 ‘He practised every kind of cruelty and lust, wielding the power of king with all the instincts of a slave’ (Tac., *Hist.* 5.9).

- 119 Kokkinos 1998, 321 n. 190.
- 120 *AJ* 20.143; cf. Schwartz 2013, 97–98.
- 121 Smallwood 1981, 273–74. Josephus tells us that after the death of Herod of Chalcis, Berenice lived as a widow for ‘a long time’ (*BJ* 20.144).
- 122 *AJ* 20.147; Kokkinos (1998, 199) has suggested that the wedding of Mariamme to Demetrius took place during the visit of Agrippa II to Alexandria early in 66 CE (Kokkinos places it in 65 CE) to congratulate Tiberius Julius Alexander on his appointment as Prefect of Egypt, and that quite possibly Demetrius was a member of the same illustrious Alexandrian family. If so, that marriage restored the family kinship between the latter and the Herodian monarchy, which had been broken on the death of Marcus Julius Alexander. On Demetrius of Alexandria, see also Schürer 1986, 136–37.
- 123 On the orthography of the place name, either Tarichaeae, or Tarichaea, see Kokkinos 2010, 20 n. 1. The lakeside city of Tarichaea was one of the most important urban centres in Galilee and had remained the capital of a toparchy by 54 CE (*BJ* 2.252), long after Tiberias had been chosen by Herod Antipas as his royal seat in c. 19 CE and encouraged its growth (*AJ* 18.36–38). The eminence of the older city was such that Pliny claimed that the lake was named after ‘Tarichea’ (Pliny, *HN* 5.71). Josephus is somewhat ambiguous about the location of Tarichaea, mentioning that the town was 30 stadia, roughly 5.6 km, from Tiberias along the shore (*V* 96, 132–34, 155–57, 163–68, 276, 280, 304), but he fails to indicate in which direction. Kokkinos, along with others before him, has argued for a southerly location, slightly north-west of the Bronze Age settlement of Beit Yerah (Kokkinos 2010). However, in their reassessment of the evidence and arguments put forward by other scholars, De Luca and Lena (2015) concur with majority opinion that Tarichaea (literally ‘factory or vat for salting fish’) is identical to Magdala and Migdal Nunayya (literally ‘fish tower’, mentioned in *b.Pes.* 46a). The rich ancient remains found on the site of the Arab village of al-Majdal (which stood until 1948), about 6 km distant from Tiberias to the north, are believed to be those of ancient Magdala; see further n. 306, below; also, Mason 2016, 395–400.
- 124 Bethsaida was refounded as a city named Julias by Herod Antipas after Julia, the daughter of Augustus, according to Josephus in *AJ* 18.28, but in *BJ* 2.168, he states that the renaming was to mark the accession of Tiberius in 14 CE. In that case, the honouree was Livia-Julia, the new emperor’s mother; see Mason 2001, 156 n. 1632. While all four gospels consistently refer to this place as Bethsaida (Mark 6.45; 8.22; Matt. 11.21; Luke 2.4, 15; John 7.42), Josephus, Pliny (*HN* 5.71) and Ptolemy (*Geog.* 5.14.4) call it Julias. The precise location of Bethsaida-Julias on the north side of Lake Tiberias is controversial. One possible site is al-Tell, set back from the present shoreline and alongside the east bank of the River Jordan, where an ancient settlement with remains of a temple have been found; see Arav and Savage 2015; Arav and Freund 1995; Strickert 2011. Another candidate is al-Araj, situated much nearer the shoreline, where Roman buildings have been excavated recently; see M. Aviam and R. S. Notley, <http://bibleinterp.com/PDFs/Bethsaida-Julias.pdf>
- 125 *BJ* 2.252; *AJ* 20.159. On the date of this transfer, see e.g. Freyne 1998, 130 n. 69; Schürer 1973, 472–73 n. 8. Whilst we cannot be certain when exactly Nero’s gift of territory was made, because Josephus does not provide a clear date, nevertheless from the context of his narrative, this must have occurred not long after his accession. In *AJ* (20.159), Agrippa is said to have received in Peraea only the town of Julias with its associated 14 villages, but in *BJ* (2.252) his acquisition of Peraean Abila and its district is also mentioned. His gain of a toehold in Peraea gave Agrippa a strategic presence in the south, close to Jerusalem and facing Nabataea, but much of this territory also had the merit of being agriculturally fertile.

- 126 Kokkinos 2003, 172–74; 1998, 322.
- 127 Kokkinos (1998, 387–95) puts forward an argument for dating the start of the War to mid-65 CE.
- 128 The picture presented by Josephus and Tacitus of the condition of Judaea during the administration of Felix runs counter to the claims by the advocate Tertullus, as related in Acts 24.2, that unbroken peace prevailed and that the Roman governor provided provident care such that improvements were being made for the good of Judaea. However, Tomson (2017a, 247–54) has drawn attention to the evidence from the New Testament books of Acts and Galatians that paint a similar overall picture to that provided by Josephus of growing discord through the 50s CE.
- 129 *BJ* 2.254–57; *AJ* 20.162–65. On the *sicarii* and the distinction between that group of rebels and the Zealots, if any, see Mason 2016, 254–57; Rappaport 2011; Brighton 2009; Hayward 1979; Schürer 1973, 463 and n. 33. While noting that ‘Josephus’ accounts of these groups are not entirely consistent’, Hayward (1979, 602), followed by Rappaport (2011), accepts the historian’s statement in *BJ* 7.253–54 (cf. 2.433) that the *sicarii* were organised by Judas the Galilean during the census undertaken by the Roman legate for Syria, Publius Sulpicius Quirinius, in 6 CE: the census was triggered by the deposition of Herod Archelaus and incorporation of Judaea as a Roman province (*BJ* 2.118; *AJ* 18.4). Josephus calls Judas the Galilean a *sophistēs* (*BJ* 2.118) and the *hēgemōn* (*AJ* 18.23) of the Fourth Philosophy, distinguished from the other three Jewish ‘philosophies’, those of the Sadducees, Pharisees and Essenes, by their emphasis on striving for freedom from Roman rule through violence, believing ‘that God alone is their master and leader’ (*AJ* 18.23; cf. 18.5). Similarly, the author of Acts paints the *sicarii* as a militant messianic movement (Acts 21.38). The *sicarii* are also mentioned in *b.Gittin* 56a as members of a radical resistance party. According to M. A. Brighton (2009), the term *sicarii* was used by Josephus to differentiate extremist Jews who used acts of violence to pursue their religious or political ends. Feldman has suggested that the term Fourth Philosophy ‘refers to an “umbrella” group that embraced ... various revolutionary groups’ including the *sicarii* and Zealots, which makes much sense (Feldman 1989, 426). This view is not contradicted by Mason (2016, 254–57), who claims that Josephus simply used *sicarii* ‘as a scare-word to make the violence in Judaea vivid for his local [i.e. Roman] audience’ and may be a literary construct of Josephus himself (Mason 2016, 256–57). Latin sources frequently use the term *sicarius* for an assassin, e.g. in the *Lex Cornelia de sicarii*, so a Roman audience would have been familiar with it.
- 130 *AJ* 20.179–81. On Ishmael and the house of Phiabi, see Schürer 1979, 229–31 and nn. 6, 10, 18.
- 131 Schürer 1979, 232.
- 132 Goodman 2017, 89.
- 133 *BJ* 2.271; *AJ* 20.185–88. On Festus and his attempts to suppress the *sicarii*, see Schürer 1973, 467–68; cf. Kokkinos 2012, 106.
- 134 Schürer (1973, 475 n. 21) demurs, suggesting that Agrippa’s reply to Paul was not meant to be taken ironically.
- 135 Goodman 2007, 539.
- 136 Young-Widmaier 2002, 127–28.
- 137 Mason (2008, 263–64 n. 2159) offers a convincing explanation of the *Xystus* referred to by Josephus.
- 138 On the Herodian Temple complex and Sanctuary in Jerusalem, see, e.g., Jacobson 2007; Netzer 2006, 137–78; Levine 2002, 219–43. Its splendid Royal Stoa (Basilica), in light of the elements of architectural decoration that have been discovered, is described by Peleg-Barkat (2017).

- 139 In view of the cordial relationship between Agrippa and Festus, right from the outset of his term as Procurator of Judaea, it is not surprising that he supported the king in this dispute; see Goodman 1987, 148.
- 140 According to Kokkinos (1998, 192–93, 200–201), this Helcias may have been a son of Alexas Helcias, the grandson of Herod's sister Salome. It makes sense, because, as a Herodian aristocrat, he would have been eminently suitable to plead Agrippa's case before the emperor.
- 141 On the life of Poppaea Sabina, see Minaud 2012, 97–120. Josephus describes her as a 'god-fearer' (*theosebēs*; *AJ* 20.195), which, in this context may mean no more than she was a very pious woman. Josephus was sent on a mission to Rome a few years later (in 63 CE, according to Kokkinos 1998, 392) to seek the release of priests, with whom he was acquainted, who had been sent in bonds by Felix to Rome on some trifling charge (*V* 13–16). Josephus arrived in Italy by sea, disembarking at Puteoli, where, through the good offices of a Jewish mime artist, he obtained an introduction to Poppaea. He called on the empress, possibly at her nearby Campanian villa that has been identified as an imperial retreat at Oplontis on the Bay of Naples (De Caro 1987, 131–33; Giordano 1982). Josephus states that she interceded on his behalf and sent him away with gifts.
- 142 Kokkinos (1998, 201) suggests that Ishmael and Helcias were set free at the death of Poppaea in the autumn of 65 CE. On Joseph Cabi (or Kabi), see Schürer 1979, 232 and n. 19.
- 143 On Albinus, see Mason 2008, 222–23 n. 1730; cf. Kokkinos 2012, 106; Schwartz 2011; Schürer 1973, 468–70.
- 144 *AJ* 20.200. On Ananus son of Ananus, see Schürer 1979, 232. His father, Ananus son of Sethi, had served as High Priest half a century earlier (6–15 CE), having been appointed by the concurrent Roman legate for Syria, P. Sulpicius Quirinius (Schürer 1979, 230 and n. 9). Ananus the elder is identified with the Annas mentioned in the New Testament (*AJ* 18.26, 34, 20.198; Luke 3.2; John 18.13–24; Acts 4.6). On the references to that individual in the New Testament and their inaccuracy, see Mason 2008, 327 n. 2714; Schürer 1979, 216.
- 145 Later, Ananus son of Ananus was appointed joint supreme commander of the rebels holding Jerusalem (with Joseph son of Gorion; *BJ* 2.563) and he was active in the preparations for defending the city against the Romans (*BJ* 2.648). However, he cherished the hope of abandoning the preparations for war and convincing the Zealots and their allies to adopt a more moderate stance, but fell victim to Idumaeans hotheads (*BJ* 2.651; 4.314–18). Alone of the rebel leaders, Ananus received a poignant tribute from Josephus (*BJ* 4.319–25), part of which is quoted on p. 8.
- 146 *AJ* 20.208–209. Ananias son of Nedebaeus enjoyed a chequered career (Schürer 1979, 231 nn. 16–17). In c. 47 CE, he was appointed High Priest by Herod of Chalcis (*AJ* 20.103). About three years later, he and other eminent Judaeans had been sent to Rome in chains for trial before Claudius following the Jewish-Samaritan squabbles during the governorship of Ventidius Cumanus, as related on pp. 31–33. Ananias and one of his sons, Ananus, one-time Captain (*stratēgos*) of the Temple, survived this ordeal and returned to Jerusalem thanks to Agrippa's successful intercession. In c. 56 CE, Paul was brought before the chief priests and council (*synhedrion*), charged with preaching heretical ideas and for bringing gentiles into the Temple. Ananias ordered Paul to be struck on the mouth (Acts 21.26–23.5). He stayed in office for about 12 years, until c. 59 BCE, when Agrippa II replaced him with Ishmael son of Phiabi (*AJ* 20.179). Ananias' house in Jerusalem was torched by the insurgents at the very beginning of the War (*BJ* 2.426). He was killed by fanatical insurgents led by Menahem, the son (or grandson) of Judas the

- Galilean not long afterwards (*AJ* 20.441)
- 147 The 'Polemo, King of Cilicia' can only be Polemo II, client king of Pontus from 38 to 63 CE, whose realm was augmented with the eastern part of Cilicia (Cilicia Trachaea). It was added to his domain in 41 CE and he continued to hold that territory after Pontus itself was turned into a Roman province in 63 CE; see Kokkinos 1998, 381–82; Schürer 1973, 474 n. 10.
- 148 Kokkinos 1998, 322, 381–82. As for Polemo, 'he was relieved simultaneously of his marriage and of further adherence to the Jewish way of life' (*AJ* 20.146).
- 149 Matt. 16.13; Mark 8.27; previously Paneas and more recently known in the Arabic form, Banias.
- 150 *RPC* 1, nos. 4988–90. The authors of *RPC* 1 are not convinced that these coins refer to Caesarea Philippi (Paneas), but they are unable to identify another Neronias where these coins could have been minted; see *RPC* 1.1, p. 685; Kokkinos 2003, 174. The legend on another coin issued in the name of Agrippa II under Nero (*RPC* 1, no. 4991 = *TJC*, no. 132) reads 'of Caesarea which is also Neronias'; see [Section A2.2](#), p. 177.
- 151 Kokkinos 2003, 174; 1998, 323, 398; with reference to Dio 62.19.1–21.2; Suet., *Nero* 12.3–4; cf. Tac., *Ann.* 14.20–21.
- 152 Goodman 2007, 382.
- 153 Ma'oz 2008, 1587–90; Wilson 2004, 2–4.
- 154 Herod's other *Augustea* were established at Caesarea Maritima and Sebaste (Samaria); *BJ* 1.404; *AJ* 15.363. The one at Paneas is depicted on most of the coins issued by Philip the Tetrarch (*RPC* 1, nos. 4939–48, 4951–52 = *TJC*, nos. 96–106, 109). According to the coin images that temple was tetrastyle and of the Ionic order, but one needs to bear in mind that these representations are very schematic. The site and remains of Herod's *Augusteum* at Paneas are contested; see Marshak 2015, 209–17; Netzer 2006, 218–22; Wilson 2004, 9–16.
- 155 *BJ* 2.168; *AJ* 18.28; cf. Wilson 2004, 19–22.
- 156 Tsaferis 2007, 337–39; Wilson 2004, 36–37; Wilson and Tsaferis 1998.
- 157 This attribution is supported by a coin of Agrippa II, which is dated 82/83 CE, found lying on a floor of one of the vaulted chambers at the eastern end of the palace complex (Wilson and Tsaferis 1998, 61). The final excavation report remains to be published.
- 158 The process of Romanisation of palace architecture in Judaea was begun by Herod the Great and is clearly manifested in the Northern Palace at Masada and the Third Winter Palace outside Jericho (Jacobson 2006, 107–14; Netzer 2006, 58–73, 265–69).
- 159 Hartal 2008.
- 160 Jos., *AJ* 20.211. Earlier, Josephus had stated that it was Agrippa I who built the theatre as well as an amphitheatre in Berytus, in which he sponsored gladiatorial spectacles there – an early implementation of this grisly Roman entertainment in the Levant (*AJ* 19.335–37). This is also an example of a client king acting as an agent of *Romanitas* even beyond his kingdom (Millar 1990, 13). Two client kings of Emesa, Sampsigeramus II (c. 14–c. 42 CE; *IGLS* 5.2747) and Sohaemus I (c. 54–73 CE; *IGLS* 6.2760 = *CIL* 3.14387a), who were near contemporaries of Agrippa II and his father, respectively, are also recorded in honorific inscriptions found in Beirut and provide testimony to the Roman *colonia* of Berytus being a magnet for benefactions from client kings across the Levant. On Sampsigeramus II, see Kokkinos 1998, 315 nn. 173–74; Sullivan 1977c, 212–14. For Sohaemus I, see n. 110.
- 161 *AJ* 20.212. From the 1st century BCE, there was a growing demand for such replicas, which predominate in collections of Greek sculpture to be seen in various

- museums; see Hemingway 2002, 26–33; cf. Anguissola 2014; Ridgway 1984. Herod the Great had ordered large copies of the famous statues of Zeus at Olympia by Pheidias and the Hera at Argos by Polycleitus for effigies of Augustus and Roma in his new *Augusteum* at Caesarea Maritima (*BJ* 1.414).
- 162 Kokkinos 1998, 325.
- 163 *AJ* 2.220–21. Perhaps mindful of Pilate’s siphoning of funds from the Temple treasury to pay for a new aqueduct to improve Jerusalem’s water supply (*BJ* 2.175; *AJ* 18.60), the workmen demanded to be paid daily, rather than allow their wages to be held on deposit in the Temple and be susceptible to requisitioning by the Roman authorities.
- 164 Kokkinos 1998, 325; cf. Goodman 2017, 88–91.
- 165 A few years earlier, another Jewish queen, Helena of Adiabene had also discharged a Nazirite vow that she had made, in her case contingent on the safe return of one of her sons from a war (*m.Nazir.* 3.6).
- 166 *BJ* 2.277. On Gessius Florus, see Mason 2008, 226 n. 1767; Kokkinos 2012, 106; Schürer 1973, 470.
- 167 *AJ* 20.252; cf. Goodman 1987, 9 n. 13.
- 168 Suet., *Nero* 32; Griffin 1984, 186–87.
- 169 Tac., *Ann.* 14.31–39; *Agric.* 15–16; Dio 62.1–12. This revolt was triggered by the annulment of the will of Boudica’s late husband, Prasutagus, which conferred half of his assets to his two daughters and the rest to Rome. No doubt, acting under pressure to replenish Nero’s coffers, Roman officials seized all the late king’s assets, assaulted his widow and raped his daughters (Tac., *Ann.* 14.31). For a detailed treatment of Boudica’s revolt and the background to it, see Aldhouse-Green 2014, 67–92.
- 170 Tac., *Ann.* 15.42; Suet., *Nero* 31; Pliny, *HN* 36.111; cf. Mason 2016, 315–18; Shotter 2008, 139–42.
- 171 On the *Domus Aurea*, see Segala and Sciortino 1999. Nero’s project to construct a Corinth canal (Suet., *Nero* 19.2; Paus. 2.1.5) was begun in late 66 CE and abandoned at his death in 68 CE. It has left substantial physical traces in the form of trenches, shafts, spoil heaps and tools found in the debris. Working conditions using simple hand-tools to chisel out solid rock, which rises to a height of up to 80 m above sea level, must have been dire. On this uncompleted project of Nero and its remains, see Pettegrew 2016, 166–89; Kreitzer 2012, 231–35.
- 172 On Cestius Gallus, Roman legate for Syria (63?–66 CE), see Mason 2008, 228 n. 1792; Schürer 1973, 265 and n. 14. For coins struck in his name as legate in Antioch, see *RPC* 1, no. 4296 (65/66 CE), nos. 4303–304 (66/67 CE).
- 173 Founded in c. 22 BCE, Herod built his splendid maritime city on Greco-Roman lines, which he dedicated to his imperial patron, Augustus Caesar. Its most magnificent constructions were its immense artificial harbour with piers built of hydraulic concrete, which was overlooked by a stately temple to Rome and Augustus. Herod also erected a promontory palace jutting into the sea and adjacent theatre and amphitheatre, which have left impressive remains (*BJ* 1.404–14; *AJ* 15.331–41; 16.136–41; cf. Netzer 2006, 94–118; *NEAEHL* 1, 270–91; *NEAEHL* 5, 1656–84). On that city’s mixed ethnic makeup, see Mason 2008, 217 n. 1679.
- 174 See Mason 2008, 235 n. 1857.
- 175 On Herod’s magnificent palace in Jerusalem, see *BJ* 5.176–82; *BJ* 15.318; Netzer 2006, 129–32.
- 176 *BJ* 2.309. No mention is made of Agrippa II becoming involved in the chronic hostilities between the Greeks and Jews of Alexandria, which occupied his father’s attention, during his visit there.

- 177 It is possible that Juvenal (*Sat.* 6.159) was alluding to this incident, in his reference to Judaea as 'a place where barefooted kings keep the Sabbath'. However, there is no recorded tradition that a *nazir/nazirah* was obliged to go about barefoot in performance of their vow; that act was more in keeping with Roman rituals of supplication; see S. Schwartz 1990, 136 and n. 90.
- 178 The Antonia fortress stood high above the Temple Mount at its north-west corner. Little more than its rock core remains today; see Kokkinos 2015, 80*, 82*-83*; Netzer 2006, 120–26; Levine 2002, 92–96.
- 179 This Roman officer may be identical to Neopolitanus, the cavalry commander who Josephus encountered later outside Tiberias (V 120–21). Mason (2008, 260 n. 2114) believes this to be the case because both men shared essentially the same uncommon *cognomen*, suggesting that his family roots were in Naples (Neapolis).
- 180 Rajak 1991, 122.

5 Agrippa's address to the population of Jerusalem

Agrippa's speech to the assembled crowd in Jerusalem represents the high point of his career, as viewed through the lens of Josephus (*BJ* 2.345–404). According to the historian, it also marks the watershed, as the Jews reached the point of no return from peace to war. The gist of Agrippa's speech was that a rebellion against Rome would be futile due to the invincibility of the imperial power and, in any case, could not be justified. We know that Josephus was in Jerusalem around that time and is likely to have heard the speech first-hand (*V* 20–21).

The king's address was either a complete invention of Josephus, composed as a fitting discourse for the occasion,¹⁸¹ or was a reworking by him of an account provided by Agrippa of what he actually said.¹⁸² Scholars have observed that this speech has a vocabulary and style that are redolent of Josephus' language and imbued with his own philosophy of history.¹⁸³ The argument presented in Agrippa's speech shares much in common with Josephus' and Titus' exhortations to the rebels during the siege of Jerusalem, urging them to come to their senses and lay down their arms (*BJ* 5.362–419; 6.328–50). Rajak is convinced that this speech, like others in the *Bellum*, was created by Josephus, for the most part, and used 'to communicate or to set off his own interpretation of what happened'.¹⁸⁴

Even if Josephus did not carefully record what was actually said at the time by Agrippa and afterwards embroidered the king's oration with his own views, surely, he would have remembered the principal themes and arguments used in the original speech. In that sense, he ought to be given some benefit of the doubt in representing Agrippa's own position on the futility of standing up to the might of Rome. This may mean that Josephus merely dressed up Agrippa's speech in his own style and embellished it with his interpretation of the crisis, profiting from the benefit of hindsight. The fact that Agrippa was sent a copy of the *Bellum* manuscript to review and the king gave it his seal of approval lends credibility to that point of view.¹⁸⁵

In the addresses by Josephus and Agrippa, there is an insistence that Tyche or good Fortune (*agathē tuchē*) had passed over from other nations to Rome and that it was also God's will that, despite their former glory, the various nations had fallen under Roman dominion. Tyche as the arbiter of political change had been articulated two centuries earlier by the Greek historian, Polybius, even to the extent that, in his scheme, the powers of Tyche and the supreme deity are intertwined.¹⁸⁶ However, there are telling differences between the respective speeches reproduced in Josephus, one of which can be tested against other evidence. Tyche is brought to the fore as the agent responsible for Rome's greatness, being invoked four times in Agrippa's speech (*BJ* 2.360, 369, 373, 387). The emphasis on Tyche is repeated as a recurring coin type on Agrippa II's coins (see [Appendix A2.3](#)). On the other hand, Tyche is mentioned just once in the appeal made by Josephus to the besieged in Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.369). In his address, it is God who is supreme in determining the fate of the Jewish people and the success of Rome. As befits a more traditional Jew, Josephus anchors most of his arguments in passages from the Bible, whereas Agrippa is more focussed on highlighting Rome's ascendancy as a world power. S. Schwartz notes that other 'details of Agrippa's speech are unparalleled in the other great speeches' in the *Bellum*, especially his marked concern for the fate of the Jewish diaspora in the event of a war.¹⁸⁷ Therefore, I am inclined to side with E. Gabba's position that 'the crux of Agrippa's speech ... actually corresponds with what he tried to convey to his Jewish audience'.¹⁸⁸

The reported speech of Agrippa on the eve of the War is devoid of interest in the spiritual leadership of the Jewish people and he makes no mention of its priesthood, which is particularly strange in view of his erstwhile responsibility for the care of the Temple and appointment of its High Priests. Not once does he refer to the traditional role of the priesthood in Judaeian society. This is in marked contrast to Josephus' own preferences. In his writings, the historian extols the virtues of the priestly aristocracy, while disparaging monarchy with its Achilles' heel of legitimate succession, which compromised both the Hasmonaeian and Herodian dynasties.¹⁸⁹ While no texts that can be directly ascribed to Agrippa II survive first-hand, we know that many of the rhetorical conventions and other literary devices that we encounter in the speeches reported by Josephus were commonplace among Roman men of letters. They are likely to have been acquainted with the works of earlier Greek historians, such as Thucydides (c. 460–c. 400 BCE), Polybius (c. 200–c. 118 BCE) and Posidonius (c. 135–c. 51 BCE), who are cited by Josephus and other classical authors, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus (second half of the 1st century BCE), not mentioned by Josephus, but whose writings

may have influenced him.¹⁹⁰

Agrippa's speech at the *Xystus* well conveys the condition of the Roman Empire and the confidence of the Roman state, to the extent that M. Goodman has suggested that it derived from one or more official Roman sources.¹⁹¹ However, bearing in mind that Agrippa was brought up at the imperial court in Rome, he would have been well informed about the geo-politics of the Roman Empire and its historical background. Therefore, it is to be expected that he was able to present the imperial viewpoint without much need to consult state documents for preparing his address. In that speech, Agrippa gives expression to his unequivocal allegiance to Rome, which is entirely consistent with his prior and subsequent conduct. It is noticeable that, by omitting any mention of movement of legions around the Empire in the course of campaigns, the speech creates the illusion that the Empire is a paragon of stability and placidity, thereby highlighting Judaea as an exceptional case.¹⁹² Agrippa used his address to plead for loyalty to the Roman Emperor and to emphasise the futility of rebellion against the superpower of the day. He went on to urge his audience to collect the taxes owing to the imperial coffers and to rebuild the porticoes connecting the Temple complex with the Antonia.

He began his speech by identifying three interest groups among the Jews, the 'honest and single-minded members of the community' who were determined to preserve the peace, those who nursed an ambition to regain independence and a third group, opportunists who relished the prospect of exploiting a war for personal gain (*BJ* 2.345–51). It was to the first group, with which he sympathised, that Agrippa directed his advice on what he considered to be in the true interest of the Jews. He noted that there was a mixture of motives for seeking an armed conflict with Rome, revenge for injustice and a thirst for liberty. Seeking redress for the wicked acts perpetrated by the Procurator, Florus, would only address the first of these grievances, but would not satisfy the second aspiration. It seems that, at this point, Agrippa was met with shouts from the crowd, because he paused in his discourse and requested that he could be heard in silence and without interruption, even by those in the audience who were hell-bent on conflict.

While he conceded 'that Roman governors are intolerably harsh' (*BJ* 2.352), Agrippa expressed his belief that antagonising the serving Procurator is counterproductive. Venting fury on the Roman Empire for wrongs done by an oppressive governor would be a misplaced reaction by the Jewish population, because it is likely that the misdeeds of the latter would not be known to those at the centre of the imperial administration in Rome, far removed from Judaea. It would be better to forebear the excesses of the current governor until

he was replaced. This piece of advice would have had a hollow ring to his audience, who had suffered a succession of exploitative governors without respite. However, as Agrippa noted, war, once unleashed, would not be controllable (*BJ* 2.353–55).

Regarding the strong desire for liberty nurtured by many, it was now too late to recover what had been forfeited. The time to have avoided subjection to Rome was when Pompey invaded the country. Then the Roman army was much smaller and the Jews could have counted on greater resources and capabilities. It was simply not possible to defy the might of the Empire when it was so powerful. Agrippa went on to cite the fate of greater states, like Athens that was once the queen of Greece and able to repel the mighty armies of the Persian Empire. Then he mentioned the proud Macedonians, formerly supreme under Philip and Alexander, but who have been humbled by Rome. This section of the speech is noteworthy for an admission that freedom is a desirable condition and that living under Roman dominion, the Jews, like other subject peoples, have to endure a state of servitude (*BJ* 2.355–87).

Agrippa asked his audience: ‘What are the troops, what is the armour, on which you rely? Where is your fleet to sweep the Roman seas? Where is your treasury to meet the cost of your campaigns?’ (*BJ* 2.361). He urged his audience to take stock of their people’s weakness. By comparison, the Romans maintained massive armies and held dominion well beyond the Mediterranean, to the eastern frontier on the Euphrates, to the Sahara Desert in the south and as far as Britain in the north. As for enduring the Roman yoke, not only the Macedonians, but also the rich Hellenic cities of Asia and all the peoples of Anatolia, the pugnacious Dalmatians, warlike Gauls, the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, and distant Britons, who enjoyed the natural protection of the English Channel, succumbed to it. The one-time major Mediterranean rival, Carthage, have bowed to Rome’s authority, as have the other peoples of North Africa, not least the populous Egyptians. All these *gentes devictae* (conquered nations) are kept under control by just a few legions and obediently tender tribute to the capital of the Empire. The city of Alexandria alone coughs up more revenue to Rome in one month than does Judaea in a whole year. Even the Parthians, who controlled a vast empire and dominion over many subject peoples, have felt obliged to send hostages to Rome to demonstrate their commitment to peace (*BJ* 2.362–87).

As for any putative allies coming to their rescue, Agrippa told his listeners in emphatic terms that it would be unwise to count on this possibility (*BJ* 2.388–89). Adiabene, with its Jewish royal house,¹⁹³ would not be permitted to become embroiled in a war with Rome by their Parthian overlords. Nor could the Jews rely on divine assistance

because, even on this score, Rome held the advantage. In the first place, Rome must enjoy Divine favour to have enabled that city state to amass a vast empire.¹⁹⁴ On the other hand, the Jews would need to break the Sabbath rule forbidding labour in order to contend with an enemy offensive during the day of rest, as painfully learnt by their forefathers during Pompey's attack on Jerusalem.¹⁹⁵ Such a contravention of God's ordinances would only make the prospects of Divine help highly unlikely (*BJ* 2.394).

With little prospect of reliance on God or man, a rebellion by the Jews against Rome would lead to certain ruin and widespread opprobrium for courting an insurrection (*BJ* 2.395–96). The consequences of failure would be dire. The Romans would severely punish the Jews – and may go as far as annihilation – wherever they happen to be, without mercy, to serve as an example to others contemplating insurrection. Jerusalem would be burned to the ground. Agrippa repeated his plea to avoid this disaster and to preserve Jerusalem and its sacred Temple by desisting from rebellion (*BJ* 2.398–400). Instead, he urges his audience to see sense and change course, while there is still a window of opportunity to prevent certain disaster (*BJ* 2.397). There is an air of detachment from the Jewish nation in the tenor of Agrippa's warning, as if to say that it is 'their' Temple and 'their' future that is stake, not his own.

Agrippa ended his speech with a stern warning to his audience: 'If you let yourselves be carried away by your passion, you will face, without me, this tremendous peril' (*BJ* 2.401). In other words, he made it clear that, if the Jews broke into open rebellion, they would have to face their terrible fate without him and he would part company with the Jewish nation. He underlined that his loyalty was to Rome. Only so long as the Jews would share that allegiance, was he happy to affiliate with them. Agrippa not so much entered into the rights and wrongs of the people's grievances against the Roman governor and administration, but rather emphasised the might of Rome and the existential peril that lay in store if the Jews would be so foolish as to proceed to mount a challenge. Their best chance of avoiding disaster and eventually achieving a remedy was 'to knuckle under, to dig in and wait' in the hope that the world order might change at some time in the future.¹⁹⁶

At the conclusion, Agrippa and Berenice broke into tears and his listeners cried out that they were not taking up arms against the Romans but against Florus for all the wrongs that he had done them, signalling that some of his counsel was unpalatable. Agrippa countered by reminding his listeners that they had already acted belligerently towards Rome by withholding their tribute to Caesar and had cut down the porticoes communicating with the Antonia. To

demonstrably renounce rebellion, they would need to restore the porticoes, reconstruct the passage between the Antonia and the Temple, and pay the tribute that was due: none of these matters involved Florus (*BJ* 2.402–404).

Initially, his audience took this advice to heart and began the reconstruction of the porticoes in the presence of the king and his sister, while the magistrates and the members of the Judean council (*boulē*) went out to surrounding villages and levied the tribute as Agrippa had urged. The 40 talents of arrears were speedily collected, and for a while it seemed that the threat of war had receded. However, at that juncture, Agrippa made a fatal error. He implored the aggrieved Jews to continue to remain obedient to Florus until a successor was appointed in the normal course of events. They balked at this proposal, heaping abuse on the king and forced him to leave Jerusalem; some even tried to pelt him with stones. Angered by this reaction, Agrippa and Berenice withdrew to their own dominions, after first using his authority to send the magistrates and principal citizens to Florus at Caesarea Maritima, with the intention that he would appoint some of them to collect tribute throughout the rest of Judaea (*BJ* 2.405–407). Withholding of tribute was regarded by Rome as an act of sedition.

Agrippa had misjudged the mood of his audience. He should have had the sense to heed the desperation of the populace and not urge them to put up with Florus. Instead, he ought to have given an undertaking to engage with the Roman authorities on their behalf, starting with the governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, who was senior in rank to Florus, to address their pressing grievances against Florus. Petitioning Emperor Nero to have him recalled from Judaea was likely to be a more hazardous course, particularly for Agrippa as it would have exposed his failure in exercising his primary role as client king, which was to observe unquestioning obedience to Rome. In any case, Agrippa's refusal to intercede with the Roman authorities to lighten their plight confirmed what most already knew, namely that the king was an obeisant representative of Rome. As it transpired, Florus did not survive much longer as Procurator of Judaea, but by then it was too late to stop the war.

A group of insurgents proceeded to seize Masada from its Roman garrison. Next, as mentioned earlier, at the instigation of Eleazar son of Ananias, the then Captain of the Temple, sacrifices for the emperor and the Roman people ceased, despite the protests of the chief priests and notables (*BJ* 2.409–416). These sacrifices, offered twice daily, had been instituted by Augustus, either at the expense of Rome (Philo, *Leg.* 157, 317) or of the entire Jewish community (*Ap.* 2.77). That cessation was regarded by the Romans as a grave insult and hostile

act.¹⁹⁷ It was the signal that all-out war against Rome had begun.

Within the Jewish heartlands of Judaea and Galilee, the militants could count on the active support or sympathy of a sizeable proportion of the population, across the social strata and the various religious sects.¹⁹⁸ Thus, the 'war coalition' at the beginning of the hostilities embraced Ananus son of Ananus, a Sadducee (*BJ* 2.562–63; *AJ* 20.199), as well as the leading Pharisee, Simon son of Gamaliel (*V* 191–93). There was a wide diversity of political opinions among the Jewish social élite.¹⁹⁹ The majority of the Jewish leadership of Sepphoris and Tiberias decided to remain loyal to Rome, while most of the Jerusalem élite adopted the contrary position. One might expect Jerusalemites who were related to the Herodian royal house, including Saul, Costobar and Antipas,²⁰⁰ to have maintained a pro-Roman outlook and acted resolutely in that regard. While, in the *Bellum*, the brothers Saul and Costobar are shown in such a light (*BJ* 2.418, 556), in the *Antiquitates*, Josephus paints them as opportunistic bandit chiefs, who operated with their own armed gangs in the deepening civil strife that afflicted Jerusalem at the outbreak of the Judaeo-Roman War.²⁰¹ Nor did political sympathies in Judaea always divide along family or class lines, as we learn from the example of one of the sons of Ananias, Eleazar, who served as Captain of the Temple.²⁰² Unlike his father and brothers, he joined the ranks of the rebels in Jerusalem, as we have seen.

It is possible that, in deciding to take on the might of Rome, the rebel leadership was counting on succour from the other major power in the region, Parthia. While direct aid from the Parthian regime was not forthcoming, some support for the rebellion was provided from the Jewish diaspora, including communities within the Parthian Empire (*Dio* 66.4.3) and from the Jewish proselyte nobility of Adiabene (*BJ* 2.520; 5.474), contrary to what Agrippa had anticipated in his address to citizens of Jerusalem (*BJ* 2.388).

¹⁸¹ Mason 2008, 265; Rajak 1991, 123–24.

¹⁸² Gabba 1976/77, 189.

¹⁸³ In his notes to Agrippa's address, which encompass a critique of the text, Mason has amply demonstrated the hand of Josephus in the text as we have received it, through the use of unusual words and phrases that are characteristic of that writer. See Mason 2008, 269–311 nn. 2165–542.

¹⁸⁴ Rajak 1991, 123; 2002, 80–81; cf. Mader 2000, 26–27; 130–35.

¹⁸⁵ *V* 366. See the discussion in Gabba 1976/77, 189; Rajak 2002, 75; 1991, 122–23; Saulnier 1991, 199–221; Michel 1984, 957.

¹⁸⁶ *Pol.* 36.17.2–4; cf. Hau 2011, 187.

¹⁸⁷ S. Schwartz 1990, 135 with *BJ* 2.398–99.

¹⁸⁸ Gabba 1976/77, 189; cf. S. Schwartz 1990, 133–34.

- 189 For example, *Ap.* 2.185; Mason 2008, 268; 2003, 74, 134, 154.
- 190 Horrillo 2013; van Henten 2005.
- 191 Goodman 2007, 69–70; cf. Gabba 1976–77, 190.
- 192 Mason 2008, 267–68.
- 193 On Adiabene and its royal house, which converted to Judaism in the 1st century CE, including a comprehensive discussion of the documentary sources and Rabbinic traditions, see Marciak 2014. See also below, n. 229.
- 194 *BJ* 2.390–93. On Rome’s world domination as the will of the God of Israel, see Kaden (2011), who believes that it is revealing of Josephus’ own outlook, but that viewpoint surely applies no less to Agrippa II.
- 195 For the capitulation of Jerusalem to Pompey’s forces on a Sabbath or the Day of Atonement in late 63 BCE, see *BJ* 1.145–51; *AJ* 14.61–70; Dio 37.16.1–4; cf. Schürer 1973, 239–40 n. 23.
- 196 Rajak 1991, 132.
- 197 *BJ* 2.409–416. Subsequent activities of Eleazar son of Ananias in Jerusalem during the War are recounted in *BJ* 2.424, 443, 445, 450, 453, 566.
- 198 Goodman 1987, 207, 209, 215–16.
- 199 Cohen 1990, 164.
- 200 Intriguing possibilities regarding the royal Herodian pedigrees of these nobles are considered by Kokkinos 1998 (161 with n. 29 [Antipas], 201–205 [Costobar and Saul]).
- 201 *AJ* 20.214; cf. Schwartz 2005, 75.
- 202 Wilker 2012, 169.



6 Agrippa II in the opening phase of the Judaeen-Roman War

There were several factors that contributed to the war party gaining popular support among the Jewish population of Judaea. Josephus recognises this fact, picking out especially inter- and intra-communal discord, as we shall see. Yet, he apports much of the blame to the exploitative and antagonistic conduct of some Roman governors, which grew worse after the short interregnum of semi-autonomous rule by Agrippa I (41–44 CE). Their oppressive behaviour was exacerbated by the emperor Nero's directive to provincial administrators for increased revenue from their subjects. Tensions were brought to the boil by reckless Jewish agitators who committed outrages and inflamed passions of the Jewish population, aimed at undermining Roman authority. Grievances that played a part in

precipitating the War, according to Josephus, are examined in Mason, Goodman and Bilde, among others.²⁰³

Many modern scholars have judged that Josephus' raft of reasons for the War do not tell the whole story and have suggested that there were also other underlying causes. These include a chasm that opened up between the Romans and the ruling class that they had cultivated in Judaea, which caused many members of the élite to throw in its lot with disaffected elements of the population and assume a leading role in the conflict (the thesis of Goodman) or, the contrary, social stresses within Judaeian society, combined with religious zealotry, as succinctly summarised by Mason.²⁰⁴

Certainly, the mood of despair that descended on the population fed and intensified messianic expectations for redemption. The term 'messianic' has a utopian connotation, implying that a rebellion against Roman rule was expected to be more than a liberation struggle and was intended to be transformative, in fulfilment of certain prophecies contained in Holy Writ. According to ancient historical sources, the rebel leadership was committed to ushering in a new dawn in which the Jewish nation and its ancestral faith would triumph. Josephus states:

But what more than all else incited them to the war was an ambiguous oracle, likewise found in their sacred scriptures, to the effect that at that time one from their country would become ruler of the world. This they understood to mean someone of their own race, and many of their wise men went astray in their interpretation of it.

(BJ 6.312)

This statement is echoed in Tacitus:

The (Jewish) multitude relied upon an ancient prophecy, contained, as they believed, in books kept by the priests, by which it was foretold, that at this very juncture (the outbreak of the War), the power of the East would prevail over the nations, and a race of men would go forth from Judaea to extend their dominion over the rest of the world.

(Tac., *Hist.* 5.13)

It is summed up by Suetonius:

An ancient superstition was current in the East, that out of Judaea would come the rulers of the world.

(Suet., *Vesp.* 4.5)

Appropriately the call to arms, embossed on coins struck by the Jewish insurgents, was 'for the freedom of Zion' (years 2 and 3) and 'for the redemption of Zion' (year 4).

This attempt to achieve a utopian revolution in Judaea followed a

pattern that was to be largely repeated later, even in the French and Russian Revolutions of more recent times, as recognised by S. Zeitlin.²⁰⁵ In these upheavals, the revolutionary movement is initiated under a reformist leadership, open to reason and compromise in its desire for change, but, as events unfold, the movement is hijacked by a fanatical minority with a much more radical agenda. The end result is much the same in all cases, the revolution degenerates into inter-factional strife accompanied by acts of terror, followed by disillusionment and an authoritarian reaction.²⁰⁶ These parallels confer a ring of authenticity on Josephus' account of the developing power struggle within the revolutionary movement in Judaea.

The testimony that messianism was a major motivation for the cataclysmic clash with Rome is provided by the leading Jewish and Roman historians who deal with the War – Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius – and demands due attention. From Josephus, we also learn about several charismatic figures who were active during the 1st century CE, among them John the Baptist, and attracting large followings with the promise of deliverance or redemption.²⁰⁷ Moreover, the Dead Sea Scrolls are peppered with explicit references to messianism.²⁰⁸ It is true that few of the incidents during the War mentioned by Josephus can be regarded as obvious manifestations of messianism, although he may have deliberately downplayed this phenomenon.²⁰⁹ However, he reports that as the fighting in Jerusalem reached its climax in 70 CE, with the Temple on fire, a large crowd converged on the outer court,

where they (i.e. the assembled) owed their destruction to a false prophet, who had on that day proclaimed to the people in the city that God commanded them to go up to the temple court, to receive there the tokens of their deliverance.

(BJ 6.285)

In the face of such evidence, and especially the central role played by adherents of the Fourth Philosophy, imbued with fervent messianic ideology, in spearheading the uprising, it is surprising that many contemporary scholars either downplay or ignore messianism as a major factor.²¹⁰ Josephus was certain that a divine purpose lay behind the conflict, although offering a different slant. He believed that the War and its disastrous consequences, culminating in the destruction of the Temple, were in accordance with a divine plan and were manifestations of retribution by the Almighty against Israel for its sins.²¹¹

From the summer of 66 CE, when Agrippa left Jerusalem dejected, his appeal to its residents having been ultimately shunned, until the fall of Jerusalem four years later, Josephus has rather little to say

about the king. We know that he joined the military operations at the head of an auxiliary contingent. However, his relegation to the background for most of the War partly reflects the fact that he was a minor player in the military campaign, contributing a relatively small proportion of the troops that were committed (only 3,000 out of at least 60,000, or no more than 5 per cent; see n. 266). His superior knowledge of the country might have been used for planning routes for the army and for operational logistics, as we know to have been the case during the failed campaign of Gaius Cestius Gallus.²¹² In addition, we learn that his services were called on to parley with the rebels on three occasions, but only early in the War.²¹³ Agrippa was instrumental in recovering the allegiance of Tiberias to his rule and to Rome (*BJ* 3.461). However, he failed ignominiously to achieve the surrender of Gamala through either skilful diplomacy or military means.²¹⁴ Significantly, these two cases concerned towns in Agrippa's own kingdom. His attempt to initiate negotiations with the defenders of Jerusalem earlier, during the short-lived siege mounted by Cestius Gallus, was rebuffed rather violently (*BJ* 2.523–26). On that occasion, he remained in the background, sending two representatives 'whom the Jews knew best', Borcius and Phoebus, to offer terms to the rebels. The insurgents were wary of this approach, regarding it as a ploy by Agrippa to sow dissention among the city's population and gain adherents for the king. They reacted by violently attacking these two emissaries. This incident is quite revealing as it demonstrates the degree to which Agrippa was reviled by the rebel leadership and yet they feared that he was still capable of luring a section of the Jewish population to his side.

Thereafter, Agrippa's influence on the course of events dwindled. It is noteworthy that when the theatre of operations shifted to Jerusalem and the south, away from his kingdom, Agrippa was not directly involved in any verbal engagement with the Jewish rebels; that role was left to Josephus and Titus instead. After the capture of Jerusalem, we learn that Agrippa joined in the Roman victory celebrations. Thereafter, he re-emerged briefly in conjunction with his sister Berenice and her affair with Titus and then disappeared from view altogether after giving his seal of approval to Josephus' account of the War (the *Bellum*). Because the War was, nevertheless, the pivotal event in Agrippa's life, an abridged account of it is included in this biography.²¹⁵

Figure 6.1 View of Gamala, looking east. The synagogue is clearly seen towards the lower left, above the gateway in the east wall. Lake Tiberias is visible to the far right.

Returning to the events unfolding in the summer of 66 CE, the leading citizens of Jerusalem made a last-ditch attempt to avert the looming war. They gathered together the chief priests and the populace in the Temple, in front of the famous Nicanor Gate which stood between the Court of the Women and the innermost courts of the Inner Sanctum. There they remonstrated with the insurgents to call off the rebellion and urged them to allow the resumption of sacrifices for the people of Rome and the emperor. Their pleas fell on deaf ears (*BJ* 2.411–17). In frustration, the notables dispatched two deputations for help, one to Florus, which was led by Simon, a son of the ex-High Priest Ananias, and the other to Agrippa, led by the three relatives of the Herodian monarch mentioned earlier, Antipas and the brothers Saul and Costobar. The two deputations urged troops to be sent to Jerusalem to nip the revolt in the bud (*BJ* 2.418–19). Florus sat on his hands, waiting for the war to begin, if we are to believe Josephus (*BJ* 2.420). However, we are told that Agrippa II, despite having been spurned by the populace of Jerusalem, continued to hope for a while longer that a way out could be found, ‘anxious that the Romans should not lose the Jews nor the Jews their Temple and mother-city, moreover, that this disorder was not in his own interest’ (*BJ* 2.421). Certainly, Nero and his advisors would take a dim view of a client king who could not maintain order in a city where he held some authority. Therefore, it was only to be expected that Agrippa responded by dispatching 2,000 cavalry from Auranitis, Batanaea and Trachonitis, under Darius, as cavalry commander (*hipparchos*), and Philip son of Jacimus, as general (*stratēgos*).²¹⁶ Their remit was to rid the Judean capital of the rebels and break their stranglehold on the Temple.

Agrippa’s forces, with the support of notables, chief priests and other members of the peace party, managed to wrest control of the Upper City, while the Lower City and Temple remained firmly in the grip of the insurgents.²¹⁷ Both sides fought hard to dislodge their opponents, but the insurgents led by Eleazar received reinforcements of *sicarii*, which tilted the balance in their favour and enabled them to dislodge the loyalists from the Upper City. They then set fire to the homes of the local élite, including the house of Ananias the High Priest as well as the palace(s) of Agrippa and Berenice, meaning the Hasmonaean palace with its Herodian extensions (*BJ* 2.422–26). The next target of their rampage was the public archives, with the purpose of destroying all debtor records and gaining popular support (*BJ* 2.427).

Meanwhile, many of the loyalists and Herodian aristocrats managed to retreat to Herod’s palace on the western side of the city, where they barricaded themselves in, while others hid in underground

passages.²¹⁸ Those who took refuge in the palace included Ananias, his brother Ezechias, and the members of the delegation that had sought help from Agrippa; they had apparently returned to Jerusalem with his military expedition.

On the following day, in the middle of August 66 CE, the insurgents attacked; two days later they captured the Antonia and massacred its Roman garrison. Afterwards, they laid siege to Herod's palace (*BJ* 2.430–32). The rebels obtained further reinforcements with the arrival of Menahem, the son of Judas the Galilean, the founder of the Fourth Philosophy and a band of his followers.²¹⁹ We are told that Menahem entered Jerusalem 'like a veritable king' and that he and his men brought with them the contents of Herod's armoury at Masada, which they had pilfered. These weapons were deployed in the assault of Herod's palace. After putting up a stiff resistance, the defenders sued for terms at the beginning of September. Agrippa's troops and native-born Jews were permitted to evacuate the palace, while the remaining Roman soldiers in Jerusalem were denied the same opportunity but nonetheless managed to withdraw from their camp in the palace grounds to the three towers built by Herod overlooking the palace from the north: Hippicus, Phasaël and Mariamme.²²⁰

While besieging the towers in which the Roman soldiers had taken refuge, the ex-High Priest, Ananias and his brother Ezechias were cornered in the palace grounds, where they had been hiding, and were killed by Menahem's irregulars (*BJ* 2.441–42). Eleazar's partisans were appalled by this gratuitous violence and decided to rid themselves of Menahem and his followers. They launched their attack while he was paying his devotions in the Temple, resplendent in royal robes. Some of Menahem's followers managed to flee to Masada, including Eleazar son of Jairus (Ya'ir), another descendent of Judas the Galilean (*BJ* 7.253). The royal pretender was tracked down and put to death, along with his henchmen (*BJ* 2.443–48). After several days under siege, Metilius,²²¹ the commander of the Roman troops holed up in the three towers, sent envoys to Eleazar, the Captain of the Temple, asking to be allowed to surrender in exchange for a promise that he and his men would not be harmed. The besiegers intercepted the petition carried by the envoys and assented to the terms that had been requested. However, after the Roman soldiers had laid down their arms, Eleazar's men treacherously slaughtered them. Only Metilius was spared, after pleading to be allowed to adopt the Jewish faith and be circumcised. To cap it all, this hideous massacre was carried out on a Sabbath, the day of rest (*BJ* 2.449–56).

The movements of Philip son of Jacimus, Saul and Costobar, after they had conferred with Agrippa II, are somewhat confused, due to substantial inconsistencies between Josephus' two separate

accounts.²²² These men would have returned to Jerusalem, where they were confronted with the arrival of Menahem and the assault by his armed followers on Herod's palace, because Josephus refers in passing to their joining those who took shelter in the palace (*BJ* 2.429). What is clear is that these three Herodian loyalists seem to have been covered by Menahem's 'amnesty' and vacated the palace. Two of them managed to escape from Jerusalem, although we are told that Antipas decided not to flee with the others (*BJ* 2.556–57). The account in the *Vita* has Philip escaping alone from the palace while it was under siege and successfully leaving Jerusalem in disguise five days later, evading the rebels with the help of some Babylonian-Jewish kinsmen who were in the city.²²³ He then headed to Gamala, in Agrippa's kingdom (*BJ* 3.56, 4.2). In the other version of their escapade, all three of them somehow hung on in Jerusalem, for about three months, until the expedition of Cestius Gallus was defeated (see below), when they managed to flee from Jerusalem, along with many eminent inhabitants (*BJ* 2.566), to join Gallus and his army in retreat (*BJ* 2.558). We are further told that, at their request, Gallus sent the three of them on to Nero, who was then in Achaëa, to inform him of the catastrophic events in Judaea, heaping the blame on Florus, and deflecting charges of Cestius Gallus' culpability – he was desperate to avoid being branded with responsibility for this failure (*BJ* 2.558). It seems that it was their report that convinced Nero to dispatch Vespasian to crush the growing revolt (*BJ* 3.1). Gessius Florus must have been replaced as Procurator of Judaea at this point by Marcus Antonius Julianus, possibly a relative of Felix, if the latter's *gentilicium* was Antonius.²²⁴

With the disintegration of law and order in Judaea, bloodletting became the order of the day, the violence spreading through the province of Syria. In Caesarea Maritima, gentiles massacred their Jewish neighbours, all of whom were expunged from that city, and similar atrocities followed in other cities with mixed populations, with some of the worst excesses being perpetrated in Scythopolis (Beth She'an). In other places, including the trans-Jordanian towns of Philadelphia (modern Amman), Esebonitis (Ḥesbān) and Gadara, Jewish mobs were responsible for initiating the violence. There were some notable exceptions to these scenes of butchery, namely Antioch, Sidon, Apamea and Gerasa, which refused to harm their Jews (*BJ* 2.457–80).

Now that war had broken out, Cestius Gallus, the Roman legate for Syria felt obliged to intervene. He departed from Syria with a large force, comprising the XIIth Legion Fulminata at full strength, 2,000 men from the other three legions stationed in Syria (Tac., *Ann.* 4.5), namely the IIIrd Gallica, VIth Ferrata, Xth Fretensis, plus six cohorts of

infantry and four wings (*alae*) of cavalry, further augmented by auxiliary contingents supplied by client kings (*BJ* 2.500). Agrippa contributed to this expedition 3,000 foot-soldiers and less than 2,000 cavalry, Antiochus IV of Commagene provided 3,000 archers on foot and 2,000 cavalry and Sohaemus I of Emesa added 4,000 troops made up of cavalry and the rest mostly archers, bringing the total to some 35,000–40,000 men; by comparison, Jerusalem's resident population apparently numbered between 60,000 and 90,000 souls.²²⁵ The morale of the XIIth Legion could not have been high, having previously suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Parthians and Armenians and with the survivors returning to Syria in disgrace.²²⁶

By contributing fewer than 5,000 men to the expedition, Agrippa's force was smaller than that of Antiochus IV of Commagene. In view of earlier engagements of his troops with the rebels in the north, it is very likely that part of Agrippa's army was kept there to safeguard his kingdom. Agrippa's modest army was made up of light infantry, including unmounted archers (*BJ* 3.68), and at least 2,000 cavalry (*BJ* 2.421), with some of his serving officers being Roman recruits, like the centurion named Lucius Obulnius, known from several inscriptions found in localities of what was Auranitis, which are dated to Agrippa's reign.²²⁷ His infantry corps appears to have been composed mostly of Ituraean and other gentile inhabitants of his realm, while a significant proportion of his cavalry and archers were drawn from the Babylonian Jews who Herod the Great had settled in Batanaea. The horsemen were trained and led by Philip son of Jacimus. That community furnished an *ala* of cavalry of about 500 men for the king's bodyguard.²²⁸

On his march to Jerusalem in the autumn of 66 CE, Cestius Gallus randomly slaughtered civilians encountered by his forces, including 50 in Lydda who had remained behind, while the rest of the inhabitants were away in Jerusalem celebrating the Festival of Tabernacles. Gallus' army then set fire to that town and some villages in its path (*BJ* 2.514–15). This tactic of gratuitous violence and destruction was intended to cow the Judean population into submission, but it had exactly the opposite effect of augmenting the ranks of the insurgents. Gallus' army then advanced into the Judean hills, establishing their camp at Gabao (biblical Gibeon), just 9 km north of Jerusalem (*BJ* 2.516). With their ranks now swollen, the Jewish insurgents, seeing a Roman army approaching the capital, abruptly ceased their festivities, went out and ferociously attacked the opposing force, killing 515 Roman soldiers, with the loss of only 22 of their own men. Those that distinguished themselves in this encounter included Monobazus and Cenedaeus, kinsmen of Monobazus II, King of Adiabene,²²⁹ Niger of

Peraea and Silas the Babylonian, who had deserted to the insurgents from the army of King Agrippa.²³⁰ The Roman army column was attacked as it continued its march to Jerusalem. Its rear-guard and baggage train were mauled by rebel fighters under the command of Simon son of Gioras, who was to loom large as one of the two main leaders of the insurrection (*BJ* 2.521). Perceiving that this expedition was in extreme peril, Agrippa decided to attempt mediation. As mentioned earlier, he sent two members of his court, Borcius and Phoebus,²³¹ who were well known to the Jews, to present the insurgents with an offer of an amnesty on behalf of Cestius Gallus, conditional on the rebels disarming and affirming their allegiance to Rome. The insurgents, fearing that the offer presented by these emissaries would induce large-scale defections from their ranks, gave this initiative short shrift, killing one of the envoys (Phoebus) and wounding the other (*BJ* 2.523–26). Any citizen of the city who protested their behaviour was neutralised by intimidation and worse.

Gallus pressed on to Jerusalem, setting up camp on Mt. Scopus, overlooking the city from the north-east. He waited there for three days for signs from the rebels that they might be willing to accept his terms. No response was forthcoming, so Gallus launched an attack on the city, occupying and setting fire to the new northern suburb of Bezetha and the ‘Timber Market’,²³² which had been emptied of its inhabitants, who had retired to the inner city and Temple enclosure (*BJ* 2.528–30). Unprepared for undertaking a siege, Gallus paused and thereby lost the initiative, but Josephus blames this hesitation on Florus bribing the field commander (*stratopedarchēs*), Tyrannius Priscus, and most of the cavalry commanders, in order to draw out the hostilities (*BJ* 2.531–32). This hiatus enabled the moderate city notables, prompted by Ananus son of Jonathan, to communicate to Gallus from the city walls and offering to open the gates to him if he would agree compromise terms.²³³ Cestius Gallus hesitated to respond, enabling the rebels to notice what Ananus and his group were up to. They were hauled down from the wall and the rebels made them withdraw to their homes under a hail of stones (*BJ* 2.533–34). Gallus’ army resumed its attack and pressed its assault on Jerusalem from all sides, including the northern perimeter of the Temple, for five days. Roman soldiers were preparing to set fire to the northern gate of the Temple enclosure and the defenders were beginning to lose heart, when Gallus unexpectedly decided to call off his military expedition and withdrew (*BJ* 2.540).

Seeing the Roman army suddenly abandon their offensive emboldened the insurgents, who pursued the retreating column, waylaying it whenever suitable opportunities arose and picking off stragglers (*BJ* 2.541–45). A two-day halt at Gabao (Gibeon), where the

Roman army column jettisoned most of its baggage, enabled their pursuers to augment their numbers. Gallus gave orders to accelerate the retreat and his men reached the notorious Beth Horon defile leading down from the Judaeen hill-country towards the coastal plain, where over 200 years earlier, the Maccabees had caused Seleucid armies much grief.²³⁴ At this perilous defile, Gallus' army was harried and only escaped being overwhelmed by the onset of nightfall (*BJ* 2.546–50). At daybreak, the remnants of the Roman force fled towards the relative safety of Antipatris on the coastal plain, which they reached with the insurgents hard on their heels. Josephus estimates losses by the Romans and their allies in this disastrous campaign in October-November 66 CE as 5,300 infantry and 480 cavalry (*BJ* 2.551–55). To add insult to injury, the rebels enriched themselves with a large quantity of captured Roman weaponry and military equipment. Cestius Gallus did not long survive the failure of his Judaeen expedition. Before the arrival of spring, 67 CE, he was dead, no doubt wracked by the shame of his humiliating defeat (Tac., *Hist.* 5.10). He was succeeded as Roman legate for Syria by Gaius Licinius Mucianus.²³⁵

In the interval between the retreat of Cestius Gallus and the campaign of Vespasian and Titus, which ensued, Agrippa left his kingdom to visit Cestius Gallus in Berytus. In his absence, the administration of his kingdom was delegated to Noarus, also called Varus, who we encountered earlier. While Agrippa's back was turned and, without permission, Varus ordered a detachment of Agrippa's soldiers to massacre members of a deputation from the Babylonian-Jewish colony of Batanaea, which had called on him (*BJ* 2.482–83; *V* 54–58). Varus continued to commit seemingly unprovoked outrages against Agrippa's Jewish subjects until Agrippa was apprised of his conduct and dismissed him (*BJ* 2.483; *V* 61). However, Agrippa spared his life out of respect for King Sohaemus, to whom Varus was related.²³⁶

In place of Varus (Noarus), Agrippa appointed Aequus Modius, an old comrade of Philip son of Jacimus.²³⁷ Philip, heartened by the news that Varus had been dismissed and replaced by Modius, wrote to the latter, relating his recent experiences. Encouraged to learn of Philip's successful escape from Jerusalem, Modius dispatched the letters that he had received from Philip, who had asked him to deliver them to Agrippa. The king, briefed by Philip that he was safe and that the rumour that he had gone over to the Jewish insurgents was false, sent horsemen to fetch Philip and bring him to Berytus, where he was staying. On arrival, Philip was given a warm reception (*V* 180–82). With Philip away, some young hotheads attacked the leading citizens of Gamala and forced the inhabitants to join the rebellion, executing

those who opposed them (V 185). They then targeted the neighbouring Babylonian Jews in Batanaea, most of whom were steadfastly loyal to the Herodian monarchy, killing Philip's kinsmen, Charēs and Jesus.²³⁸

Following the failure of the campaign of Cestius Gallus to restore Roman authority in Judaea, the Jewish factions worked to consolidate their position. The moderate groups and militants who had taken up arms against Gallus met together in the Temple precincts to set up an independent administration and military command, wooing remaining pro-Roman elements to join them (*BJ* 562). Joseph son of Gorion and Ananus son of Ananus, the former High Priest, were either elected or appointed to head their supreme revolutionary council (*BJ* 2.563; V 62). This body, which may have been a reconstitution of the pre-existing Judaeian council (*synhedrion*), appointed military commanders for different regions. Jesus son of Sapphas, described as one of the chief priests,²³⁹ and Eleazar son of Ananias were appointed for Idumaea (with Niger of Peraea to provide additional support), Joseph son of Simon for Jericho, Menasseh for Peraea, John the Essene for the north-west of the Judaeian heartland (Thamna, Lydda, Joppa and Emmaus), John son of Ananias for the north-east region (Gophna and Acrabatene), while Josephus was assigned command of the two Galilees (upper and lower), 'with the addition of Gamala', that is, his remit included an important part of Agrippa's kingdom (*BJ* 2.566–68). However, the Zealot leader, Eleazar son of Simon, who had played a significant role in confronting Gallus, had shown himself to be corrupt, having helped himself not only to the spoils taken from the Roman expeditionary force but also to some of the public funds. Being considered untrustworthy and despotic, he was excluded from office in the revolutionary administration. However, through skilful manoeuvring he eventually managed to win control of the supreme command (*BJ* 2.564–65).

Having temporarily shaken off the Roman yolk and attempts at intervention by Agrippa II, the revolutionary council and its regional commanders set about addressing their priorities. One was to organise local militias and construct fortifications for protecting the larger settlements. Josephus mentions that, in Galilee, Sepphoris, which possessed a degree of autonomy, was granted dispensation to construct its own defences, while John son of Levi was encouraged to fortify his home town, Gischala, at his own initiative. As for Josephus' activity at this time, he boasts in the *Bellum* that he created an army in Galilee adding up to well over 60,000 men (*BJ* 2.583), which is ludicrous, but settles for more credible troop numbers in the *Vita*, where he cites having at his disposal 3,000 infantry and 80 cavalry, supplemented by a further 5,000 armed recruits.²⁴⁰ Josephus also

appointed local judges and magistrates: he mentions the magistracy that he constituted in Galilee, which seems to have been modelled on the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, being composed of 70 elders, responsible to him directly and charged with the authority to deal with important matters and capital cases, while a team of seven was appointed in each city to adjudicate petty disputes (*BJ* 2.569–84; cf. *V* 79).

At this point in his narrative, Josephus turns his attention to John son of Levi of Gischala, who was an officer in his Galilean armed force and afterwards one of the two principal Jewish commanders (the other being Simon son of Gioras) in the later phase of the War.²⁴¹ Josephus describes the rupture of his relationship with John, giving his side of how it came about (*BJ* 2.590). He notes that, initially, he welcomed John's offer to take responsibility for the construction of Gischala's fortifications but was dismayed to learn that John had profiteered from this undertaking.²⁴² Josephus also accused John of gaining personally from procuring local olive oil to serve the needs of the Jewish community of Caesarea Philippi (Paneas), which had been confined to that city by Agrippa's viceroy, Aequus Modius (*BJ* 2.591–92; *V* 74–75). There are contradictions between his two accounts, which speak of personal rivalry between Josephus and John of Gischala.²⁴³ The real cause of friction between the two men was John's ambition to attain a higher rank (*BJ* 2.590; *V* 70; 79); in other words, Josephus saw John as a serious rival, admitting at one point that 'if he [John] could get rid of Josephus, he would himself become governor of Galilee' (*BJ* 2.593). The bitter antagonism was evidently mutual and it is probably correct that John son of Levi prevailed on his influential friend, Simon son of Gamaliel, respected Pharisaic sage and member of the supreme council, to try stripping Josephus of his command of Galilee.²⁴⁴ Seen in this light, his hostility and vindictiveness could well have driven Josephus, after being detained in Roman custody when he gave himself up at Jotapata, to denounce John as a dangerous enemy whom the Flavian generals should target, as suggested by Mason.²⁴⁵ Such a scenario might explain how John, once a respected and moderate citizen of Gischala, fled his home town and fetched up with the rebels in Jerusalem, becoming one of their most formidable leaders.

Their mutual enmity can readily account for Josephus' character assassination of John in the *Bellum*. In that work, he characterises his opponent as a notorious and deceitful bandit, claiming that he rose from the gutter (*BJ* 2.585–87; 4.85). Yet, this portrait does not ring true when we glimpse through the cracks in this portrayal, exemplified by details recorded in the *Vita*. There John is mentioned as a responsible resident of Gischala, urging his fellow citizens to maintain their allegiance to Rome and taking responsibility not only

for its fortifications but also for 'building Gischala on a grander scale than before' (V 43, 45). Goodman points out that some of the well-heeled company that John kept, particularly Simon son of Gamaliel, hardly tally with someone who is made out to be an impoverished ruffian.²⁴⁶ He also notes that Titus' treatment of John after the War, namely life imprisonment rather than death by crucifixion, suggest that the Romans regarded John as a rebellious aristocrat rather than a bandit (BJ 6.434).

Josephus' command of Galilee was never secure, with his many enemies including John of Gischala and Jesus son of Sapphias, the chief magistrate (*archōn*) of Tiberias, conspiring intrigues and firing accusations of disloyalty and tyranny against him.²⁴⁷ On occasion, he was assailed by angry mobs. The exact course of events in Galilee from the outbreak of the rebellion to the start of the Roman offensive in the spring of 67 CE are described somewhat differently in the *Bellum* (2.595–646) and *Vita* (126–389). Mason has provided a useful summary of those parallel accounts.²⁴⁸ From these two separate threads, a fairly clear outline emerges of key events. By his own admission, Josephus himself practised guile and deceit, feigning wholehearted loyalty to the revolutionary council in Jerusalem, but meanwhile pursuing his own agenda. In the struggles with his rivals, the main towns in Galilee, Tiberias and Sepphoris switched sides more than once. At one point, the pro-Roman élite in Tiberias appealed to Agrippa for military support to defeat the rebels, but Josephus stepped in and imposed control of the city before the king was able to respond (BJ 2.632–46; V 155). When the notables again called on Agrippa for help from a threatened attack by a band of rural Galilean rebels, it was again Josephus and not the king who intervened (V 381–89). The disorder in Galilee demonstrates how little authority the king wielded there. By the time Vespasian and his legions arrived in Galilee, they found its population divided in its loyalties: Sepphoris had already declared for Rome, Gischala remained the fiefdom of John, while Agrippa had lost control of his portion of that territory.

As an aside, it should be pointed out that Josephus is at pains throughout his writings to emphasise that he always endeavoured to maintain an amicable relationship with the king and protected his interests. Prior to the Roman offensive, the Judaeen high command in Jerusalem had ordered Josephus, as its appointed commander in Galilee, to demolish the palace built by Herod Antipas in Tiberias, on the pretext of its figurative decoration (V 65). This order was resisted by the city notables but others, including the representatives of the lower classes, concurred that the palace should be destroyed. Their ringleader, Jesus son of Sapphias, with some of his associates, took matters into their own hands and proceeded to loot and set fire to the

building. They went on to perpetrate a massacre of the Greek residents and settle scores with their local enemies. Josephus appeared on the scene and recovered from the looters as much of the palace furniture as he could, including precious candelabra of Corinthian Bronze, which he says he kept in trust for Agrippa.²⁴⁹ Josephus also claims to have resisted an attempt by Jewish militants to coerce ‘two noble vassals of the king’ from Trachonitis, who had sought to join the rebels in Tarichaea, to undergo circumcision.²⁵⁰ Not long afterwards, when the wife of the royal steward (*epitropos*), Ptolemy, was waylaid by Jewish raiders from the village of Dabarittha while crossing from Agrippa’s realm to Roman-ruled territory near Mount Tabor with her retinue, he says that he made strenuous efforts to retrieve the goods that had been seized and restore them to the king.²⁵¹ Sometime later, Josephus helped a messenger of Agrippa, who had been imprisoned in Tiberias, to escape and return to the king (V 388–89).

East of Lake Tiberias, Josephus was called on by the insurgents holding Gamala to send reinforcements and workmen to repair the walls of the town (V 186). At the same time, he fortified two other settlements in the same district, Seleucia and Sogane.²⁵² Meanwhile, Agrippa had instructed Philip to return swiftly to Gamala with the support of a detachment of cavalry, in order to extricate his supporters to a place of safety, to return the Babylonian-Jewish colonists to their homes in Batanaea as well as to try preventing the insurrection spreading among the king’s subjects. We are further told that Philip hastened to carry out this mission (V 183–84). Presumably, he was less successful in fulfilling that remit, for we learn that the king dispatched another force headed by Aequus Modius to regain Gamala (V 114). That expedition, too, proved unsuccessful, with the town withstanding a seven-month blockade.²⁵³ Agrippa’s failure to bring Gamala to heel was to have repercussions on his prospects after the War. It had to be left to Vespasian and his formidable army to reduce Gamala a year later. Agrippa was more successful with regard to Sogane and Seleucia which, at an early stage of the War, were induced to accept the king’s authority (BJ 4.4).

While Aequus Modius was blockading Gamala, Agrippa’s decurion (*dekadarchos*), Aebutius,²⁵⁴ equipped with a small force, numbering a few hundred cavalry and infantry, together with auxiliaries from Gaba, a town and cavalry base founded by Herod the Great,²⁵⁵ engaged a larger contingent of infantry commanded by Josephus at the south-western corner of Galilee and were repulsed. Josephus’ men pursued this royal force as far as Besara (Beth She’arim), towards the western end of the Jezreel Valley.²⁵⁶ Josephus then turned his attention to preventing the commander of a detachment of cavalry (*eparchos*), Neopolitanus (see n. 179), who had been detailed to

protect Scythopolis, from ravaging the territory of Tiberias (V 120–21).

Agrippa made another attempt to recover his lost territory on both sides of Lake Tiberias, sending troops, both infantry and cavalry, to the area, under Sullas, the captain (*hēgemōn*) of his bodyguard. Sullas pitched his camp near Bethsaida-Julias and set up roadblocks on the routes to Seleucia, to the north-east, and Gamala, to the south-east, to prevent these rebel-held towns receiving supplies from the insurgents who by this time controlled much of Galilee (V 398). When Josephus received news about the arrival of the royal troops, he dispatched a detachment of 2,000 men under the command of one, Jeremiah, which took up a position even closer to Bethsaida-Julias, on its western side, next to the River Jordan. The following day, Josephus' men advanced to a ravine close to the earthworks protecting the royal soldiers in their encampment, offering battle and then retreating as a feint to draw in Agrippa's soldiers and spring an ambush. In the course of this action, the horse that Josephus was riding stumbled, bringing down its rider, who fractured his wrist. His men, believing that their commander was seriously injured, called off their pursuit of Sullas' men.²⁵⁷ The latter took heart from Josephus' mishap and set up an ambush of their own, but failed to take advantage of it once they heard that reinforcements of men under Josephus' command had been shipped across Lake Tiberias to Bethsaida-Julias from Tarichaea.²⁵⁸ Disheartened, the royal troops withdrew (V 399–406).

²⁰³ Mason 2016, 208–17; Goodman 1987, 7–14; Bilde 1979.

²⁰⁴ Mason 2016, 201–208.

²⁰⁵ Zeitlin 1930; cf. Rajak 2002, 126–27; Feldman 1984, 358.

²⁰⁶ Brinton 1938, cf. Rajak 2002, 126 n. 62.

²⁰⁷ Levenson 2011, 531–34.

²⁰⁸ Collins 2010.

²⁰⁹ Josephus denigrates these messianic-type charismatics as 'pseudo-prophets', 'charlatans', 'imposters' and 'deceivers' (Goodman 2007, 416), while he brands the Zealots as bandits (*lestai*; Schürer 1973, 462 and n. 29; see n. 129, above). The historian's keenness to rubbish those of his compatriots who displayed hostility to Rome, including proponents of messianism, must reflect his concern for the sensibilities of his Roman patrons, at least to some degree. Price (1992, 16 and n. 53) points out that Josephus provides insufficient evidence that most of the rebel leaders were engaged in a messianic enterprise, notwithstanding the verdict of the ancient historians about this phenomenon as a prime motivation for the War.

²¹⁰ As an extreme example, Mason totally ignores messianism in his survey of 'scholars' explanations of the causes of the conflict. In fact, in his book, *A History of the Jewish War*, he studiously avoids any references to the passages by Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius quoted above. Goodman (2007, 415–16), mentions messianism in relation to the conflict, but largely casts it aside. A notable exception is Hengel (2011, 230–311), who examines the eschatological doctrines cultivated by the Zealots, as

gleaned by that author from documentary sources, and discerns messianic pretensions of two of the Zealot leaders, Menahem and Simon son of Gioras.

211 Goodman 2007, 397–418; 1987; Bilde 1988, 198–200.

212 *BJ* 2.502; cf. Wilker 2012, 163.

213 Wilker 2012, 163; 2007, 410.

214 *BJ* 4.14–16. Gamala (or Gamla in Hebrew) is situated north-east of Lake Tiberias in the Gaulanitis. It was rediscovered in 1986 at al-Salam (or al-Sanam), meaning ‘the hump’ in Arabic, a few kilometres to the east of the north-east shore of the lake; see [Figure 6.1](#). For the history of Gamala in the light of archaeological discoveries, see Syon 2014; 2002.

215 For the chronology of the War, based on the dates of sequential events recorded by Josephus, see Levick 2017, 46–47 (table).

216 *BJ* 2.418–21. Philip’s grandfather, Zamaris, had been placed in charge of a colony of some 600 Babylonian Jews, mounted archers (and presumably their families), who were settled in Batanaea by Herod the Great in c. 7 BCE at Bathyra and satellite fortified settlements (*AJ* 17.23–27). Bathyra has been tentatively identified with the site of Bāšir, 6 km east of al-Sanamayn (ancient Aire), at the southern border of the Lejā plateau. That settlement was strategically placed to safeguard the passage of pilgrims from Babylonia to Jerusalem from marauders (Dussaud 1927, 330–31 and nn. 1–3; cf. Sartre-Fauriat and Sartre 2016, 4, 571–12). There was an endemic problem of unrest and brigandage among the restive inhabitants of Trachonitis, ‘who live in a similar state to wild beasts, hiding in caves’ (*IGLS* 16.183c; *AJ* 15.346; cf. Sartre 2005, 79–80; 2011, 212; *IGLS* 15, pp. 12–14). A few years prior to the establishment of Babylonian-Jewish colony, there had been a serious outbreak of violence in Trachonitis, that had led to the settlement of 3,000 Idumaeans in that region (*AJ* 16.273–85; cf. Graf 2016, 139–41). An edict directed at the elimination of brigandage in the region, issued later by Agrippa I or II, partly survives (*IGLS* 16.183a–d, 266 and possibly 16.245). Herod’s exemption of the Jewish colony from taxation helped it to prosper and grow, although his successors removed its tax privileges (*AJ* 17.27–28). Jacimus the son of Zamaris and then Philip the son of Jacimus continued to serve Herodian rulers as their senior military officers, with Philip being assigned command of Agrippa II’s entire army. Judging by his name, Darius, Agrippa II’s cavalry commander, was also of Babylonian-Jewish heritage. At least one of their fortresses, Ecbatana, was named after the famous Median city of that name (*V* 54–57). This community evidently maintained strong memories of its Parthian heritage for some time. These settlers and their offspring stayed mostly loyal to the Herodian dynasty. Archaeological evidence for this Babylonian-Jewish colony and their settlements has proved elusive. The name Jacimus (*yqym*) appears in Nabataean script in a couple of inscriptions in Batanaea in 7/6 BCE, possibly in an Ituraean context (Naveh 1975, 118–20), and there are two later Greek inscriptions in Trachonitis mentioning [*I*]akeimos (*IGLS* 15.37 [Qabbara]) and *Ikeimos* (*IGLS* 15.530 [Burāq]), but none of these can be connected with the Babylonian Jewish leader.

217 *BJ* 5.136–41. The Upper City was so-called because it stood on the western hill, between the Hinnom and Tyropoeon valleys, and overlooking the spur occupied by the Temple Mount, the Ophel and David’s City to the east. At its western edge stood Herod’s palace, while overlooking the eastern slopes stood the Hasmonaean palace, which had become the Jerusalem residence of Agrippa and Berenice. The Upper City was also the location of the houses of the wealthier priests and other members of the élite, as well as the town archives. Some of the sumptuous mansions from the late Second Temple period have been brought to light there in archaeological excavations; see Levine 2002, 326–35; Avigad 1989. The southern portion of the

- eastern spur, extending westward to include the Tyropoeon Valley and southwards to the Siloam Pool, constituted the Lower City, which had become a socially mixed neighbourhood by the eve of the War, with older housing and abodes of the poor and also luxury villas and at least one palace, that of Adiabene monarchs; see Kokkinos 2015, 93*–95*; Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2011; Levine 2002, 319–26.
- 218 *BJ* 2.428–29. On Herod's palace in Jerusalem, see Kokkinos 2015, 85*–87*; Levine 2002, 198–201; Netzer 2006, 129–32.
- 219 *BJ* 2.433 and n. 129. Josephus tells us that Judas the Galilean was actually a native of Gamala in the Gaulanitis (*AJ* 18.4). He may have been the son of the brigand chief, Ezechias, who was active during the reign of Herod the Great (*BJ* 2.56). Two of Judas' sons were executed by Tiberius Julius Alexander when was Prefect of Judaea (*AJ* 20.102).
- 220 *BJ* 2.434–40. The towers are described in some detail by Josephus in *BJ* 5.161–76. The main bastion of the medieval citadel of Jerusalem, next to the Jaffa Gate, is the stump of one of these towers, probably Phasaël the tallest of them, which best fits the data in Josephus; see Netzer 2006, 126–29; Kokkinos 2015, 85* n. 39.
- 221 According to his Latin *nomen*, Metilius was of Roman patrician stock; see Mason 2008 n. 2776.
- 222 *J* 2.556–58; cf. *V* 46–47; cf. Price 1991, 79–80.
- 223 Because Philip managed to escape from Jerusalem, abandoning the Roman auxiliary garrison to their terrible fate, allegations circulated which alleged that the hapless Roman troops had been betrayed by Philip to his fellow Jews (*V* 50, 182, 407), but Josephus maintains that he remained consistently loyal to Agrippa.
- 224 *BJ* 6.238. After his term in office, which ended with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE, Julianus wrote a treatise entitled *On the Jews*. It is lost but is referred to in the *Octavius* of the early Christian writer, Minucius Felix (33.4).
- 225 *BJ* 2.500–501; cf. Levick 2017, 32. It is believed that auxiliary cohorts (*cohortae* in Latin, *speirai* in Greek) of client kingdoms were usually close to 500-strong, while an auxiliary *ala* of cavalry consisted of 16 squadrons (*turmae*), each of 30–32 men. For these details and more generally on the *auxilia* supplied by Roman clients and allies, see Gilliver 1999, 22–26; Webster 1985, 141–56; Saddington 1982.
- 226 Tac., *Ann.* 15.7–17, 26; cf. Mason 2008, 357 n. 3066.
- 227 The several known inscriptions mentioning Obulnius are all from the Haurān (Auranitis), which are listed in [Section A1.5.3–A1.5.4](#). The *nomen* Obulnius crops up in epitaphs from the west of the Roman Empire, at Ostia (*CIL* 14.1420), Rome (*CIL* 6.4624, 11486, 17041, 23209, 35959) in Italy and also at Ampurias in Spain (*CIL* 2.6252), and it is possible that Lucius Obulnius was of Italic origin. All the known inscriptions relating to Agrippa II (some inferred) from the area of southern Syria have been compiled by M. Sartre and published in *IGLS*, vols. 14–16; see Appendix A1. The appointment of Roman officers to positions of command of Agrippa II's army was not new. Herod the Great had engaged Romans to command his army (see Shatzman 1991, 209–210) as did Agrippa I (Kokkinos 1998, 293). Sartre (2005, 79) has pointed out that Herod (and his heirs) were simply following the practice of Hellenistic kings, who distributed land to cleruchs in exchange for military service. From the inscriptions, it is clear that the recipients of this practice were not only the Babylonian Jews, but also 'Greeks' and Arabs. For the few facts we have about the army of Agrippa II, see also Gracey 1986, 319–23.
- 228 *AJ* 17.29. We hear of a cavalry officer, Silas the Babylonian, who defected from Agrippa's auxiliaries to the Jewish rebels and fought bravely against the Romans; see *BJ* 2.520; 3.11, 19. He probably hailed from the Babylonian-Jewish colony in Batanaea (Price 1992, 83 n. 63). A captain of Agrippa II's bodyguard, mentioned by

Josephus, is called 'Sullas' (V 398, 401, 409), who may have been of Arab heritage, rather than a Roman bearing the *cognomen* of the famous dictator, Lucius Cornelius Sulla, as supposed by Mason (2001, 558 n. 1628; cf. Kokkinos 1998, 336–37). Rather, the names Silas, Sullas, and also Sullaios or Syllaeus (e.g. the chief minister of the Nabataean king, Obodas II) may all be Greek versions of the Aramaic name ŠLY in Greek (Cantineau 1932, 150). The earliest Jewish Silas that we hear about from Josephus was a commander of a fortress located in the Lebanon, at the time of Pompey's campaign in the southern Levant (*AJ* 14.40). Another Silas was a friend of Agrippa I who served as the commander of his army (*AJ* 18.204, 19.299, 317–25, 353). The commander of Tiberias appointed by Josephus was also called Silas (*BJ* 2.616; V 89–90, 272). A Jewish Christian Silas from Jerusalem was one of the companions of the Apostle Paul (Acts 15–18). In Paul's epistles, his name is classicised to Silvanus (the god of forests), no doubt to be more congenial to Paul's gentile Graeco-Roman audiences (2 Cor. 1.19; 1 Thess. 1.1; 1 Pet. 5.12).

229 Monobazus II was the brother of Izates II and son of Queen Helena of the northern Mesopotamian kingdom of Adiabene. Izates II and Helena were instrumental in the adoption of Judaism by the royal house of Adiabene. They also cultivated close links with Jerusalem, making benefactions to the city and building their own palaces there; see *AJ* 20.17–53; cf. Marciak 2014, 29–31, 85–88 (conversion and benefactions of Helena and Izates); 163–68 (palaces in Jerusalem). It has been claimed that the remains of the main palace of the Adiabene monarchs have been located in excavations begun in 2007 on the Ophel spur, south of the Temple Mount (Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2011b), but the archaeological evidence is not clear-cut (Marciak 2018, 32–36).

230 Josephus indicates that the desertion of Silas to the rebels was far from being an isolated occurrence among Agrippa's troops; see [Section A1.5.7](#), p. 161; Price 1992, 118 and n. 18.

231 Borcius is not a Greek or Latin name, but may derive from the Hebrew, Barak, meaning 'lightning' or 'brilliance', as suggested by Mason (2008, 367 n. 3184), while Phoebus is synonymous with 'the bright one', in other words, we see here a deliberate pairing of names by meaning, suggesting that they are playful inventions by Josephus. I would like to float the idea that he uses this as a 'fix' when he could not recollect actual names attached to particular incidents. We shall encounter this wordplay with names again with Aequus Modius and Varus; see n. 237.

232 'Bezetha' is mentioned in *BJ* 2.328, 530; 5.149, 151, 246; cf. Kokkinos 2015, 87*–90*; Geva 2011. "Josephus equates 'Bezetha' in the vernacular to 'New Town'" (*Kainopolis* in Greek; *BJ* 2.530; 5.151). 'New Town', or more accurately 'New Suburb', may have been its alternative name, or the wider area which included Bezetha, as intimated by Josephus (*BJ* 5.246; cf. Kokkinos 2015, 88*), when he remarks that the hill of Bezetha was encroached on by part of the New Town. Bezetha, as transliterated in Greek, seems to derive from the Aramaic Beth Zaitha, or 'House of Olives'. See, for example, Schürer 1973, 488 n. 14. However, a different derivation, from a location called 'Beth Eshdathain', mentioned in the Copper Scroll from Cave 3 at Qumran, has been suggested by Kokkinos (2015, 88*).

233 This Ananus was probably the son of Jonathan son of Ananus, the High Priest (Kokkinos 1998, 384; Schürer 1979, 230). That Jonathan was the first notable casualty of *sicarii* brutality in Jerusalem and was already deceased at the time of this incident (*BJ* 2.256).

234 1 Macc. 3.16–25; cf. Mason 2008, 187–88, n. 1425.

235 Schürer 1973, 265–66. Coins were struck in Antioch in the name of Mucianus as legate in Antioch. See *RPC* 1, no. 4313 (68/69 CE); no. 4316–17 (69 CE).

236 *BJ* 2.483. Against the background of Varus' personal history (see n. 110), it is

possible to understand why Agrippa II, who had absorbed the tetrarchy of Noarus/Varus into his kingdom, might have deemed the latter, who was of royal lineage (V 52), suitable to stand in for him and why Noarus/Varus was only too keen to assume a leadership role and also, perhaps, why the latter's behaviour was so vindictive. On these points, there is some consistency in Josephus' otherwise conflicting accounts about Noarus/Varus (see *BJ* 2.481–83 and V 48–58; Mason 2008, 348 n. 2951).

237 V 61 and 180. Nothing is known of Aequus Modius outside the *Vita*. On the little that has been gleaned, see Mason 2001, 56 n. 326. One has to suspect the authenticity of his highly unusual Latin name, which means 'fair measure', appropriate to his role in the narrative, as the honourable man who puts to right the damage inflicted by Varus, a name which happens to translate as 'knock-kneed', 'warped', 'bent' (Mason 2001, 52 n. 291). Varus (Ouaros in Greek), though, is a fairly common name and a Varus son of Charēs is mentioned in an inscription found at al-Hit in Auranitis (*IGLS* 16.599; see [Section A1.5.5](#), p. 158). A possible scenario is that Josephus came up with Aequus Modius, having forgotten the real name of that official and being unable to ask Agrippa because by the time Josephus wrote the *Vita* (after 93/94 CE), the king was either dead or far away from Rome in his kingdom. Josephus, therefore, may have alighted on the name Aequus Modius for rhetorical effect, as he also seems to have done with Borcius and Phoebus; see n. 231.

238 V 177–78, 186. It has been suggested that this Charēs is the same individual as the Charēs, father of Diomēdēs, *eparchos* and *stratēgos* of the *cohors Augusta* under 'King Agrippa' mentioned in inscriptions from Batanaea and Trachonitis (*IGLS* 14.486, 16.615, 16.642); see Applebaum 1989, 57. Josephus mentions another Charēs, a rebel leader who died at Gamala while it was being besieged by the Vespasian and Titus (*BJ* 4.18, 68). Scholars have pointed out that Charēs is a name that is rarely encountered among Jews in antiquity and in Palestine, it is only attested, for example, on a funerary inscription from Jerusalem (*CIIP* 1.290) and on a potsherd from Beth She'an (FitzGerald 1931, 45 no. 11). However, Charēs is not uncommon in inscriptions in Greece and the Aegean. Its occurrence east of Lake Tiberias may be due to it being a homonym for the north Arabian word Ḥāris, meaning 'guardian' (King 1990, sv. ḥrs), just as the Greek name, Simon, was popular among Jews in classical antiquity as a homonym for the Hebrew name Shim'on. Regarding the terms *eparchos* and *stratēgos* in the inscriptions cited, these are Greek titles of military rank that were used in the Levant in the Roman Imperial period and are also found in Nabataean contexts (e.g. at Mada'in Salih: Healey 1993, nos. 6, 24, 32, 34, 38 [*stratēgos*]; nos. 6, 7, 20, 32, 39, [*eparchos*]). The functions and interrelationships of these military ranks are not very clear; see n. 34. The *cohors Augusta* mentioned in inscriptions from the reign of Agrippa II found at sites in Auranitis and Trachonitis (*IGLS* 16.197, 16.269a, 16.269b, 16.175) has been identified with the cohort of the same name to which the centurion who escorted Paul to Rome belonged (Acts 27.1; cf. Zeichmann 2015, 181–88; Gracey 1986, 120–21; Speidel 1982/83).

239 This individual cannot be the same as Jesus son of Sapphias, a member of the council of Tiberias (see *BJ* 2.599 and below).

240 V 212–13; cf. Mason 2008, 390 n. 3458.

241 On the history, topography and archaeology of Gischala (Gush Ḥalav in Hebrew), see Strange 2015. Concerning John of Gischala and Josephus' description of his character, see Mason 2016, 450–53. The Aramaic form of the name, Bar Giora, is not used by Josephus, but appears in Dio 66.7.1 and Tac., *Ann.* 5.12.

242 According to V 71–73, John managed to persuade Josephus' fellow senior

- commanders in Galilee to sequester all the corn stored in Upper Galilee, earmarked as the imperial tithe, which he used for upgrading Gischala's defences. As a wartime measure, this would seem to be quite reasonable.
- 243 In a series of studies, U. Rappaport set out to demonstrate that the portrait of John of Gischala painted by Josephus is markedly distorted (Rappaport 2013; 2002; 1983). He points out that John, like Josephus and Justus of Tiberius, hailed from very similar privileged backgrounds and was opposed to the more radical social agenda promoted by Simon son of Gioras.
- 244 V 192–93. Simon son of Gamaliel is recorded in the Mishnah as an important link in the unbroken chain of Rabbinic tradition emanating from the Torah given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. He is remembered for the following maxims: 'I have found naught better for a man than silence; and not the expounding [of the Law] is the chief thing but the doing [of it]' and 'By three things is the world sustained: by truth, by judgement and by peace' (*m.Avot* 1.17–18). Simon was probably heir to the renowned Gam(a)liel the Elder, and therefore the great-grandson of Hillel, a contemporary of Herod the Great (*b.Shabb.* 15a). For a blow-by-blow account of the unsuccessful attempt to relieve Josephus of his command of Galilee and related intrigues, see V 189–335; cf. *BJ* 2.626–31.
- 245 Mason 2016, 452–53.
- 246 V 190–94; cf. Goodman 1987, 201–202.
- 247 On Jesus son of Sapphias and his role in the conflict with Rome, see Mason 2001, 60 n. 355; 2008, 401 n. 3596.
- 248 Mason 2016, 356–57 and table 3.
- 249 V 66–69. Corinthian Bronze is a durable copper alloy with gold and silver, which could be depletion gilded and was highly prized by the Romans; A famous pair of Corinthian bronze doors were donated to the Temple in Jerusalem by Nicanor of Alexandria. See Jacobson and Weitzman 1992.
- 250 V 112–13; 149–54. These two subjects of Agrippa had come to Tarichaea with their horses, weapons and money, but were rebuffed by the insurgents and delivered safely to loyalist-held Hippos by Josephus. They were afterwards treated with leniency by the king.
- 251 *BJ* 2.595–607; V 126–31, 318. Dabariththa is identified with the modern village of Daburiyya (Daburiyeh) on the site of biblical Daverat (or Daberath; Josh. 19.12, 21.28; 1 Chron. 6.72) at the western foot of Mt. Tabor; see Mason 2001, 185.
- 252 V 187; *BJ* 2.574. Seleucia has left its name in Seluqiyeh, to the north-east of Lake Tiberias, close to Lake Semechonitis (Huleh); see Mason 2001, 193. The site of Sogane has yet to be properly identified; see Mason 2001, 195 (Sogane-Soganni).
- 253 *BJ* 4.10; cf. Syon 2014, 11–12.
- 254 An officer in command of a squadron (*turma*) of about 30–32 cavalry, see n. 225. Aebutius was a well-known Roman *gens*: P. Aebutius was a *duovir* of the Roman *colonia* established at Corinth by Julius Caesar, serving under both Antony and Octavian Caesar; see, for example, *RPC* 1, nos. 1124–26, 1129–31.
- 255 Gaba was situated at the western edge of the Jezreel valley, close to the Carmel range (*BJ* 3.35; *AJ* 15.294; Pliny, *HN* 5.19). Principal candidates for the site are Tell Abu Shusha, due west of Afula and close to Mishmar Ha'Emeq, and Khirbet al-Hartieh (or al-Harithah), further north, at Sha'ar HaAmaqim; see Mason 2001, 187. It appears Herod's successors retained certain rights to Gaba and its military resources.
- 256 V 115–18. Beth She'arim became an important Rabbinic centre during the composition of the Mishnah and 'Jerusalem' Talmud (3rd–4th centuries CE); on its remains, see Mason 2001, 182; Avigad and Mazar 1993, 236–48.

- 257 Following his riding accident, Josephus had to be evacuated to Capernaum, or Kefar Nahum in Hebrew (given as ‘Cepharnocun’ or ‘Capharnomon’ in surviving Greek texts; see Mason 2001, 160 n. 1654). Although not mentioned, it seems that Bethsaida-Julias did not subsequently participate in hostilities against Rome.
- 258 This statement might indicate that Bethsaida-Julias was under rebel control at that point in time. However, Mason (2001, 158–59 and n. 1635) argues otherwise.





7 From the campaigns of Vespasian and Titus to the conclusion of the War

Vespasian arrived in Antioch in early 67 CE, where the Roman general assembled his forces.²⁵⁹ His elder son, Titus, was dispatched to Alexandria to fetch one of the participating legions, the XVth Apollinaris (*BJ* 3.8, 64). Vespasian, a man of humble origins, was a seasoned soldier who had distinguished himself as a military commander in Britain, where he had participated in Claudius' invasion of Britain and then extended the area of Roman conquest in the south-west and north of the island during a five-year campaign. Vespasian's successes were recognised with the award of *ornamenta triumphalia* on his return to Rome in 47 CE.²⁶⁰ Prior to receiving command of operations in Judaea, Vespasian had served as *consul suffectus* in 51 CE and Proconsul of the province of Africa (c. 62–63

CE), where he established a reputation for financial probity, in stark contrast with the corrupt conduct of many other provincial governors.²⁶¹ Titus was to be Vespasian's second-in-command through the Judaeian campaign until his father departed for Rome to assume the Imperial mantle, when he assumed sole command.²⁶²

Agrippa had arrived with his own troops in Antioch and accompanied Vespasian to Tyre (V 407). There, in the presence of the Roman general, the king was accused by an irate group of citizens of disloyalty to them and to the Roman cause by allegedly ordering his commander-in-chief, Philip son of Jacimus, to betray the Roman military contingent in Jerusalem. After listening to both parties, Vespasian found the charges unconvincing although he advised that Philip be sent to the emperor Nero to report on his conduct.²⁶³ We hear no more about Philip.

Agrippa accompanied Vespasian to Ptolemais (BJ 3.29; V 342–43, 410); thereafter, he seems to have remained at the general's side (BJ 3.68, 443–61, 540–41; 4.14–15). The army mustered by Vespasian at the start of his campaign in Judaea comprised 3 legions,²⁶⁴ 23 cohorts of mixed infantry and cavalry and 10 additional wings (*alae*) of cavalry, drawn from Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste (Samaria) and Syria, together with auxiliary contingents provided by client kings of the region, Antiochus IV of Commagene, Sohaemus I of Emesa, Malichus II of Nabataea and Agrippa II.²⁶⁵ Josephus estimated the full strength of Vespasian's army at 60,000.²⁶⁶

By early summer, the Roman general was ready to lead his formidable army into Galilee. Vespasian's first target after leaving Ptolemais was the small town of Gabara, identified with the present village of 'Arabeh.²⁶⁷ Finding that its combatants had fled, the Roman soldiers vented their fury on those civilians who remained, young and old alike, out of revenge for the humiliating defeat of Cestius Gallus (BJ 3.132–34).

A major point of resistance in northern Galilee was the nearby town of Jotapata, where the Jewish defenders, led by Josephus, stubbornly resisted a siege for 47 days.²⁶⁸ While Vespasian was laying siege to Jotapata, he dispatched Marcus Ulpius Traianus,²⁶⁹ the commander of the Xth Legion, with 2,000 infantry and 1,000 cavalry, to take Japha, a small town close to Nazareth, which had joined the rebellion.²⁷⁰ Japha had been fortified by a double enceinte. The insurgents ventured out of the town to confront the Roman force. The Roman soldiers routed them in a charge, whereupon they advanced to the town, but found that the frightened inhabitants had barricaded themselves behind the inner enceinte. The rebel combatants, found themselves trapped between the two circuits of walls where they were easily picked off by their Roman pursuers. Traianus called on his

Flavian superiors to supervise the capture of the town and enjoy the prize of victory. Titus brought in reinforcements to hasten its capture, but the inhabitants of Japha put up an unexpected resistance, obliging the Romans to fight their way through its narrow alleys. They ended up massacring all the males, leaving alive only women and infants, who were subsequently sold as slaves. The Romans completed their conquest of the town in July 67 CE (*BJ* 3.289–306).

When, at length, Jotapata fell to Vespasian that same month, the Romans showed little mercy to the inhabitants, massacring the surviving males and sparing only the women and children, who were destined for slavery (*BJ* 3.323–39). Josephus, who was found hiding in a cave underground, narrowly escaped a similar fate by appealing to the superstition and vanity of Vespasian when he was brought before the Roman commander-in-chief, telling him that he and his son Titus were ordained by God to become emperors of Rome.²⁷¹ Agrippa and his troops do not appear to have had a conspicuous role in the siege and capture of Jotapata, or most of the other engagements in Vespasian's campaign in western Galilee, and it is notable that the king is not mentioned as being present at the meeting of Josephus with Vespasian after the capture of Jotapata by the Romans.

The War impacted harshly on the Samaritan population, too. In the midst of the military campaign, a large group of Samaritans congregated on Mount Gerizim, their most sacred site, armed and in an agitated mood.²⁷² Alarmed by the hostile gathering, Vespasian dispatched Sextus Cerealis Vettulenus, the commander of the Vth Legion,²⁷³ accompanied by a substantial force of 600 cavalry and 3,000 infantry to Shechem. The troops cordoned off the adjacent mountain at its base. The presence of a heat-wave caused some of the Samaritans on the summit to expire from dehydration and others to desert their brethren and go over to the Romans. Vettulenus, seeing the weakening of resolve among the crowd, ascended the mountain and appealed to the remaining Samaritans to lay down their arms, promising them no reprisals if they did so. They spurned his overtures, whereupon Vettulenus and his men attacked the crowd and perpetrated a massacre. This action also took place in July 67 CE (*BJ* 3.307–15).

The Romans also directed their attention at combating a fleet operated by Jewish rebels, which was based at Joppa (Jaffa) and conducted raids on maritime traffic close to the coast, but a sudden tempest beat them to it, dashing the wooden vessels of the rebels to pieces (*BJ* 3.414–31). At this point, Vespasian responded to an invitation from Agrippa to his kingdom with the double purpose of lavishly entertaining the Roman general and his troops and entreating their help to quash the rebels in his realm. Vespasian and his troops

rested in Agrippa's capital, Caesarea Philippi (Paneas), for 20 days (*BJ* 3.443–44).

During his stay in Agrippa's capital, Vespasian learnt that 'Tiberias was disaffected and Tarichaea, already in revolt'. Vespasian and his troops cut short their rest break 'to oblige Agrippa and to repay his hospitality by recalling these cities of his to their allegiance' (*BJ* 3.445). The mood of rebellion in those towns had been whipped up largely by Jesus son of Sapphias/Saphat.²⁷⁴

Tiberias was a Herodian foundation, having been created by Herod Antipas in the middle of his reign, in about 18/19 CE, and named after his Roman patron, the emperor Tiberius.²⁷⁵ Antipas transferred his capital and the royal mint from Sepphoris to Tiberias, issuing coins bearing the name of the city from the 24th year of his reign (20/21 CE). Herod Antipas also built a palace there, decorated with a frieze or wall paintings of animals, which was destroyed by the insurgents, as mentioned earlier (*V* 65–67). After Herod Antipas was sent into exile by Caligula in 39 CE, his tetrarchy, including Tiberias, was awarded to his nephew, Agrippa I.²⁷⁶ The city enjoyed Agrippa I's patronage and he chose it as the venue for the conclave of six client kings, which had incurred the wrath of the Roman authorities (*AJ* 19.338–42). On the death of Agrippa in 44 CE, Galilee passed to direct Roman rule but, in about 54/55 CE, its eastern portion and some other territories were awarded to Agrippa II by Nero, as mentioned earlier. Despite the aversion of the site to observant Jews, on account of the presence of pre-existing burials there (*AJ* 18.38), Tiberias grew into a predominantly Jewish city and the religious objections were largely overlooked. For those observant Jews who had scruples about living within the city limits, the southern suburb of Hammath, with its renowned warm baths, offered a suitable alternative.²⁷⁷ The poor were attracted to Tiberias by the promise of land and housing on favourable terms by Antipas, but some of his subjects needed to be cajoled to resettle there (*AJ* 18.37–38). We also learn that in 66 CE there were 'Greeks' (i.e. Greek-speaking gentiles) resident in the city (*V* 67). The city possessed an imposing synagogue with a large capacity.²⁷⁸ As was usual for synagogues of that period, it served both as a house of prayer and council chamber.²⁷⁹

Tiberias boasted various other civic institutions that marked it out as a city (*polis*) modelled on Greek (rather than Roman) lines.²⁸⁰ In 66 CE, it is reputed to have had a ruling council (*boulē*) of 600 members (*BJ* 2.641; *V* 64, 284), which conducted its meetings in the synagogue.²⁸¹ The civic leader, or *archōn*, may have been elected; that could account for the holder of that post in 66 CE, Jesus son of Sapphias, being the representative of the city's poor and a supporter of the revolutionary cause (*V* 66, 134). There were also ten leading

citizens (*prōtoi*), headed by Julius Capella (or Capellus [V 32]). The ten *prōtoi*, were endowed with certain decision-making powers, and we see this in their having to sanction the destruction of the tetrarch's palace.²⁸² The city also had a capacious stadium which was another venue where assemblies were held.²⁸³

Figure 7.1 The synagogue at Gamala, viewed towards its western entrance.

Josephus provides further details about the social structure of Tiberias and the loyalties of the different segments of the population. The leading citizens (*prōtoi*), who were supporters of the status-quo, naturally urged their fellow citizens to maintain their city's allegiance to Rome and Agrippa II.²⁸⁴ Judging from their names, Julius Capellus (or Capella), Herod son of Miarus, Herod son of Gamalus and Compsus son of Compsus, their outlook is self-evident. Julius Capellus, whose father's *cognomen* was Antyllus (V 69), almost certainly belonged to a family whose lineage included Roman freedmen.²⁸⁵ The two Herods named here indicate a royalist affiliation,²⁸⁶ while Compsus (*Kompsos*), meaning refined or gentlemanly in Greek, is also appropriate for a member of the establishment. A brother of this Compsus bore the Roman *cognomen* Crispus. He was a personal valet of Agrippa II, having previously served as a Prefect of Agrippa I.²⁸⁷ Another was, of course, Agrippa II's commander-in-chief, Philip son of Jacimus from Gamala. With such a strong patrician élite at the helm in Tiberias, it is little wonder that there was strong loyalist support there (*BJ* 3.492–93).

Another group of townsfolk in Tiberias was led by Justus son of Pistus who, in social terms, was on a par with the *prōtoi*. He played on intra-communal tensions and rivalry between his city and Sepphoris. According to Josephus, his motivation was a quest for power (V 36). At a personal level, Pistus and his family had good reason to be hostile to the rebels. A brother of Justus had his hands cut off by the *Galilaoi*, that is, rural Galileans, many of whom were among Josephus' supporters,²⁸⁸ while a sister was married to Jesus, a relative of Philip son of Jacimus, who tried to keep Gamala loyal to Agrippa (V 178; Jesus is called the brother of Philip in V 186).

The hesitation of Justus in joining the rebellion was genuine even though the reason given by Josephus is not biased as he was against Justus (V 36). However, in front of a public assembly held in the synagogue, Justus came out in support for Jesus son of Sapphias and his party of extremists (V 279). Thus, while Justus in his writings accused Josephus of behaving like a Zealot, the same charge could be (and was) reciprocated. In practice, both men were pragmatists, who

had been exposed to Graeco-Roman culture and Imperial politics. Both knew that the War against Rome would be futile and ultimately disastrous. As Rajak notes, Josephus and Justus clashed on account of the fact that each was playing his own double game.²⁸⁹ They were not synchronised in their tactics and, moreover, both vied for the favour of Agrippa, which might protect them from Roman retribution. Their mutual hostility endured, even after they found safe havens. Josephus, as noted earlier, entered the lion's den, the camp of Vespasian, following the fall of Jotapata and managed to redeem himself by making an oracular pronouncement that flattered the Roman commanders, Vespasian and Titus. Justus followed a different course. When Vespasian drew near to Tiberias, Justus fled to the protection of Agrippa and remained with the king at Berytus as his private secretary (V 351–57). Through Agrippa's intercession, following the earnest entreaty of Berenice on his behalf (V 343, 355), Justus managed to get Vespasian's death sentence for instigating the burning of villages belonging to the cities of the Decapolis commuted (V 341–43). Having extricated themselves from the rebel cause, both Josephus and Justus wrote accounts of the War for a Graeco-Roman public, justifying their respective conducts in the conflict. Thus, the two of them succeeded, through their deft switch of allegiance to the winning side, in saving their own skins. One detects that Josephus' enmity for Justus was stoked by rivalry for the patronage of Agrippa II and desire to win a favourable reception of his War memoirs. Ultimately, Josephus trumped his rival, having won the ear of Vespasian. Consequently, Josephus' account of the War has survived while that of Justus has not.

Justus' account of the conflict, against which Josephus' *Vita* was his polemical response, was published some 20 years after the events described.²⁹⁰ Josephus makes much of Justus' long wait until Vespasian, Titus and Agrippa were all dead, before publishing his work (V 359–60). Josephus uses this fact to score points at Justus' expense. Justus, he maintains, had not dared to publish until there was no one alive who could refute his lies. Josephus gleefully points out that Justus' relationship with Agrippa had not always been smooth, noting that Justus was twice imprisoned, twice exiled, once sentenced to death by Agrippa and finally banished (V 355). Josephus accused Justus of setting Tiberias on the road to rebellion (V 36, 41; 341–44), in retaliation for Justus' accusations of the same kind (V 340). He points to Justus' attacks in 66 CE on the pro-Roman Jewish city of Sepphoris and to the raids he led against the Decapolis cities, Gadara, Hippos and Scythopolis (Beth She'an). These raids must be viewed in the context of the bitter animosity between Jews and local Greek-speaking gentile population, often collectively referred to as

‘Syrians’ or ‘Greeks’, which at that time reached boiling point, as can be ascertained from the *Bellum* (2.458–80). The Jewish inhabitants of Caesarea Maritima had been massacred, and the ‘Syrians’ of the Decapolis cities had taken this atrocity as a cue to perpetrate similar outrages, while Jews from the outside had responded by raiding the territories of the gentile cities.²⁹¹ The massacre had been most severe in Scythopolis (V 26), where the native Jews had tried to remain loyal to the local gentile majority, but to no avail (*BJ* 2.466–76; V 26). There can be no doubt that this intercommunal strife contributed to the wide geographical spread of the conflict. The strong antipathy between the Jews of Judaea and many of their gentile neighbours can be traced at least as far back as the period of Hasmonaean expansion into areas settled by non-Jewish communities, and places further afield where Jews settled, including Alexandria and Antioch, through the 1st century CE and beyond.²⁹²

Sepphoris provides a shining example of a Jewish urban centre that managed to remain at peace.²⁹³ Although willing to resist the designs of the rebels on their city, Sepphoris was unable to withstand the offensive by a rebel army led by Josephus.²⁹⁴ However, not long afterwards, its inhabitants welcomed Aulus Caesennius Gallus at the head of XIIth Legion, which Gaius Cestius Gallus tasked with re-imposing Roman control over Galilee.²⁹⁵ At this early stage of the War, we are informed that the citizens of Sepphoris pledged their allegiance to Rome and admitted a Roman garrison (*BJ* 3.30–31; V 30, 124). Josephus contradicts himself on this point. In the *Vita*, he claims that Sepphoris was among the towns and villages that he fortified with walls, implying that it had joined the rebellion or was preparing to do so (V 188; cf. 203). However, in his earlier account in the *Bellum*, he states that he left it to the Sepphoreans to organise their own defences (*BJ* 2.574), which would suggest that Josephus turned a blind eye to the pro-Roman stance taken by the citizen body. Indeed, when Vespasian arrived at Sepphoris, he was warmly received. Its citizens not only reaffirmed their loyalty to Rome, but also signalled their willingness to provide active support against the insurgents. They proclaimed their Roman sympathies on a pair of coin types struck in 67/68 CE, which are inscribed on their obverse ‘In the time of Vespasian, of the City of Peace (Eirenopolis), Neronias-Sepphoris’ and ‘Year 14 of Nero Claudius Caesar’.²⁹⁶ The motif displayed on the reverse of the larger of these coins, a caduceus between two crossed cornucopias, is also very apposite, being a cypher for allegiance to Rome as the standard-bearer of tranquillity, prosperity and well-being.²⁹⁷ At the request of its inhabitants, the Romans boosted the town’s garrison with a substantial force of infantry and cavalry, consisting of 1,000 cavalry and 6,000 infantry under the command of

the military tribune Placidus (*BJ* 3.32–33, 59). We are told that the infantry established quarters within the city, while the mounted detachment camped not far away in the Jezreel Plain. This military reinforcement was deemed sufficient to repel any attempt by the Jewish rebels to invade the city. The Romans appreciated the strategic importance of Sepphoris, being one of the largest cities in Galilee and located in the heart of that province (*BJ* 3.34).

The combination of a *polis*, modelled along Hellenic lines, with a Jewish majority characterised the two principal cities of Galilee, Tiberias and Sepphoris, which endured up to the early Byzantine period.²⁹⁸ There was, however, a perennial rivalry between the two cities, for primacy in Galilee (*V* 37–38). Josephus tells us that Sepphoris, by emphasising its loyalty to Rome, was awarded the mantle of capital of Galilee and the royal bank and archives were transferred there during the governorship of Gessius Florus (*V* 38). In *b.Sukk.* 27a, it is related that an *epitropos* of King Agrippa, who alternated his domicile between Tiberias and Sepphoris, consulted Rabbi Eliezer (son of Hyrcanus) about the proper observance of the Feast of Tabernacles in those circumstances. The King Agrippa in question must be the second of that name, because Rabbi Eliezer is known to have flourished during his reign. Accordingly, this story indicates that Agrippa II exercised authority and his administrators held office in both towns, even though Josephus nowhere explicitly states that Sepphoris belonged to his kingdom.²⁹⁹ Supporting evidence, albeit indirect, is provided by the pair of coins struck in Sepphoris in 67/68 CE and the group of three denominations struck in Caesarea Philippi, which are undated, but struck sometime between 63 and 68 CE.³⁰⁰ These issues are very close in style, all featuring on their reverses a circular panel bearing a five-line inscription set inside a very similar wreath. Also, the two groups of coins belong to the same denominational system, introduced by the Seleucids, according to their respective weights.³⁰¹

With both pro- and anti-war sentiment running high among the inhabitants of Tiberias, when Vespasian, accompanied by Titus, arrived at the city's gates with their large army, the remonstrations of the notables there and intercession by Agrippa tipped the balance and Tiberias submitted to the Roman general without fielding any resistance nor was there any looting by the army. The city reaffirmed its loyalty to the king (*BJ* 3.448–61; cf. *V* 32–42; 340–42; 352; 391). No doubt, the action of the population in admitting Vespasian and his troops to their city and greeting him 'with acclamations, hailing him as saviour and benefactor' helped to ensure that the city would be left unscathed (*BJ* 3.459). After staging token defiance, members of the pro-War faction slipped away to Tarichaea.³⁰²

Because the city elders of Tiberias, abetted by Agrippa, had succeeded in extricating their city from the War, there is evidence that the town continued with business as usual after the War. Two lead market weights embossed with Greek inscriptions dating, respectively, from years 22 and 23 of an era of Agrippa II have surfaced from the vicinity of Tiberias.³⁰³ If the years marked on them relate to the earlier of Agrippa II's two principal eras (i.e. 55/56 CE), then they correspond to 76/77 and 77/78 CE, but if they are reckoned from the later era of Agrippa II (i.e. 60/61 CE), these weights would date to 82/83 and 83/84 CE, respectively. In either case, they postdate the War. The *agoranomoi* named on these artefacts are a similar mix of conspicuously Jewish names (Iaesaias son of Mathias), names of likely Semitic origin (Animos son of Monimos) and Latin names (Rufus and Julius), as encountered before the War among the leading men of Tiberias,³⁰⁴ indicating a high degree of continuity of life in that city, which later flourished as a leading centre of Rabbinic scholarship.³⁰⁵

Tarichaea proved to be a more difficult challenge for the Romans.³⁰⁶ Like Tiberias, that town had been strongly fortified with ramparts by Josephus at the outbreak of the War (*BJ* 3.464–65; cf. *V* 156). The war party was well entrenched there, even before that town was augmented by many fugitive insurgents from Tiberias. Although the town initially put up a determined resistance to the Roman army, dissention broke out among its inhabitants, which allowed the legions to enter Tarichaea from its unwallled side facing Lake Tiberias. Many of the rebels took to a fleet of boats that had been made ready in the event that they would need to evacuate the town, but the Romans built rafts that were used as platforms for archers and lancers to pick off their opponents on the lake (*BJ* 3.462–531). After the town fell in late September, 67 CE, Vespasian set up a tribunal to fix the fate of its vanquished occupants. He drew a distinction between the citizens of Tarichaea and the rest. The former, being subjects of Agrippa, were bound over to the king, who must have been present at this tribunal. We are told that he sold off his quota, presumably as slaves. Insurgents who had come from elsewhere were executed or sold as slaves with 6,000 of the most able-bodied male captives being shipped to Greece to toil on Nero's Corinth canal (*BJ* 3.532–42). Coins of Vespasian, bearing the legend *Victoria Navalis* and the motif of a winged Victory on the prow of a ship, would seem to commemorate the successful Roman military operation on the lake.³⁰⁷

Having subdued Galilee, Vespasian advanced with his army east of Lake Tiberias to attack Gamala, the last major outpost in Agrippa's kingdom that remained in rebel hands. During the siege preparations, Agrippa approached the ramparts in an attempt to parley with the defenders and discuss terms of capitulation. He was struck with a

stone on his right elbow hurled by one of the slingers stationed on the walls (*BJ* 4.14). The siege was then resumed with renewed vigour.³⁰⁸ After a protracted fight with heavy losses on both sides, the Roman army, led on this occasion by Titus, entered Gamala in mid-November (*BJ* 4.11–53; 62–83). Josephus notes that only two women survived the fury of the Roman army, both nieces of Philip son of Jacimus (*BJ* 4.81). The campaign in Galilee by Vespasian and Titus concluded the same month with the routing of the small hostile force guarding Mount Tabor, with the fugitives from that encounter escaping to Jerusalem (*BJ* 4.54–61). There was also the capitulation of Gischala in Upper Galilee,³⁰⁹ following the flight of the native rebel leader, John son of Levi along with many of his fighters to Jerusalem, where they considerably augmented the ranks of its defenders (*BJ* 4.84–120).

The Romans consolidated their grip on Galilee by planting garrisons in the smaller towns and villages and rebuilding some of the local infrastructure during the lull in the fighting (*BJ* 4.442). The final actions by the Roman legions that year focussed on securing the north-western approaches to Jerusalem from the coast at Jamnia, Azotus and further inland at Lydda (*BJ* 4.130, 444). Vespasian then wintered some of his troops in Scythopolis (the Xth Legion) and the rest at Caesarea Maritima (*BJ* 4.87).

In the months leading up to the resumption of fighting when the winter had passed, according to Josephus, the various factions in Jerusalem, rather than consolidating and making concerted preparations to face the Roman onslaught on Jerusalem, dissipated much of their energy in feuding. The moderates, headed by the former High Priest Ananus son of Ananus, had maintained their position and much of their influence in the city up to this point, although they had to contend with Eleazar son of Simon and his supporters. The large group of Zealots arriving from Galilee with John son of Levi of Gischala, compounded the struggle for dominance in Jerusalem.³¹⁰ In this contest, the remaining moderates, including relatives of Agrippa, were eliminated (*BJ* 4.138–50). One of those murdered at this time was Antipas, who had remained in Jerusalem and had been put in charge of the public treasury by the revolutionary council (*BJ* 4.140). Others of royal blood who lost their lives in this internecine strife included two named by Josephus as Levias and Syphas son of Aregetēs.³¹¹ Desperate to rid the city of the violent extremists, Ananus son of Ananus mounted an operation against them (*BJ* 4.151). The Zealots, who had established themselves on the Temple Mount, reacted by deposing the incumbent High Priest, Matthias son of Theophilus, an appointee of Agrippa (*AJ* 20.223), and replacing him with a nonentity, Phanni (Phanasus) son of Samuel who, it is claimed, was chosen randomly by lot.³¹² This interference in the High

Priesthood appalled most of the population. In response, an emergency meeting of the revolutionary council was convened, presided over by highly respected leaders of Judaeen society, including Joseph son of Gorion³¹³ and Simon son of Gamaliel, the Pharisaic sage, who was mentioned earlier. Although Simon son of Gamaliel had crossed swords with Josephus, he earned the historian's praise for his intelligence, integrity and renown as a problem fixer (V 191–92). At the meeting, Ananus son of Ananus denounced the Zealots and, in a long speech, he exhorted the citizens of Jerusalem to take up arms and corral their foes within their redoubt on the Temple Mount, then attack them there (*BJ* 4.162–92).

This tactic was successful for a time in confining the Zealots to the inner area of the Temple Mount, but John of Gischala then capitalised on the standoff by putting himself forward as a mediator between the two opposing sides to negotiate a treaty. However, instead of performing that task impartially, he craftily proposed to the Zealots that they tilt the balance of control of the city in their favour by calling on the support of the Idumaeans from southern Judaea. The Idumaeans responded to that invitation (*BJ* 4.208–35). Forewarned of their arrival, Ananus had the gates of Jerusalem shut against them. The attempt by Jesus son of Gamalas, 'the chief priest next in seniority to Ananus' to remonstrate with the Idumaeen leaders from the battlements of Jerusalem to support moderation and not to reinforce the extremists was scorned.³¹⁴ Under cover of a heavy thunderstorm, the Zealots cut through the bars of the gates, allowing the Idumaeans to pour into the city. They immediately slaughtered the sentries of Ananus, who were on duty. Then the unruly Idumaeans proceeded to loot and kill anyone who tried to stop them (*BJ* 4.286–313). Next on their hit list were the chief priests and among those they killed were Ananus son of Ananus and Jesus son of Gamalas. The Zealots joined forces with the horde of Idumaeans on their rampage, tracking down, imprisoning and executing members of the Judaeen élite, occasionally attempting to justify their actions by staging summary trials (*BJ* 4.314–44). The outrages committed by the Zealots were of such enormity that many of the Idumaeans began to have regrets about their involvement and made it known that they wanted to disengage from the Zealots and their excesses (*BJ* 4.345–52). The Idumaeans signalled their change of heart by freeing about 2,000 incarcerated prisoners, many of whom ran off to join another rebel leader, Simon son of Gioras, who would loom large during the final contest for Jerusalem. Most of the Idumaeans then promptly headed back home (*BJ* 4.353), although some decided to remain in the city and played a conspicuous role in the events that unfolded.

The Zealots continued to carry out atrocities in Jerusalem and, we

are told, only those inhabitants who were able to make themselves inconspicuous escaped the attentions of the fanatics (*BJ* 4.354–65). The Roman generals rejoiced at the dissention in the ranks of their adversaries, and urged their commander-in-chief, Vespasian, to march immediately against Jerusalem, but he decided that it would be wiser for his army to bide its time while the strength of the rebels was being sapped by factional bloodletting (*BJ* 4.366–76). Vespasian's strategy was borne out by the continuing attrition of the rebel forces, through terror, desertion and splits within the Zealot ranks. All the while, John of Gischala strengthened his grip on Jerusalem (*BJ* 4.377–97). Josephus remarks later in the *Bellum*:

I maintain that it was the sedition that subdued the city, and the Romans the sedition, a foe far more stubborn than her walls; and that all the tragedy of it may properly be ascribed to her own people.

(*BJ* 5.257)

This disastrous internal strife was seared in the Jewish collective memory, with the Talmudic rabbis later pointing out that the destruction of the Second Temple (i.e. that rebuilt by Herod) was due to baseless hatred (*b.Yoma* 9b).

There were also war-related developments taking place outside Jerusalem. The *sicarii* had taken possession of Masada, which they used as a base for launching raids against fellow Jews with whom they were at odds. Josephus mentions a particularly callous act committed by the *sicarii*, a raid on En Gedi (Engaddi) for provisions, catching its inhabitants off-guard at night, while engaged in their Passover feast, or *seder* (*BJ* 4.398–409).

In the new year, the Xth Legion which had wintered in Scythopolis recommenced its campaign. Led by Vespasian, the legion crossed the Jordan to Peraea, and proceeded to Gadara, where it received a friendly reception from its wealthy residents in March 68 CE, while their adversaries fled the city for Bethennabris (Beth Nimrah), opposite Jericho. There they were hunted down and either annihilated, driven to commit suicide or were taken prisoner by the Romans (*BJ* 4.410–37). The Roman troops conducted mopping up operations in Peraea, as far south as Machaerus, which remained in rebel hands (*BJ* 4.438–39). Afterwards, a squadron was dispatched to occupy Gerasa (Jerash) and hunt down insurgents and their associates in the city and its environs; the soldiers also burned down houses of the insurgents and plundered their property (*BJ* 4.486–89). The best known of the rebels from Gerasa was Simon son of Gioras,³¹⁵ who had first distinguished himself in waylaying the convoy of Cestius Gallus during its expedition to Jerusalem. Afterwards, he and his band of fighters took to mugging wealthy inhabitants of Acrabatene, north of

Jerusalem, and pillaging their homes, until Ananus son of Ananus and the magistrates of Jerusalem sent an armed force to put a stop to their lawless activity. Thereupon, Simon and his men sought shelter with the rebels at Masada (*BJ* 2.652–53; 4.503–507).

After they had received word of the death of Ananus son of Ananus at the hands of the Idumaeans, Simon and his followers left the protection of Masada for the Idumaeen hill country, where they resumed their rampage and succeeded in building up their strength. They gained mastery of Idumaea and of Simon's previous haunt, Acrabatene to the north, in preparation for an assault on Jerusalem. A sally undertaken from Jerusalem by the Zealots, intended to confront the forces of Simon, was checked by his forces (*BJ* 2.653–54; 4.508–14). The Zealots also launched a series of smaller-scale ambushes in passes through the Judaeen hills, capturing the wife of Simon in one of their surprise forays. However, the savage attacks made on those venturing out of Jerusalem and the verbal threats made by Simon to the Zealots entrenched inside the walls of Jerusalem induced them to release their prize hostage (*BJ* 4.538–44).

During the spring of 68 CE, Roman military operations were directed at isolating Jerusalem from its hinterland. Vespasian left Caesarea Maritima with the main body his army and moved south to Antripatris, where order was restored and the surrounding settlements laid waste and burned. They then proceeded south-east to Lydda and Jamnia, which had already been pacified, and continued to Emmaus (Ammaus) (*BJ* 4.442–44). As the Roman army worked its way southwards, neutralising resistance as it progressed, it sealed the northern and western approaches to the capital of Judaea with a string of fortresses constructed and manned by the Vth Legion. Vespasian then proceeded eastwards with his troops from Emmaus through the hill country, reaching Jericho in late June (*BJ* 4.445–48). There, they were rejoined by the Xth Legion, commanded by Traianus, which had been detailed to complete the campaign in Peraea. Jericho, a major Jewish town in the Jordan valley, was found deserted, its population having fled into the mountainous Judaeen hinterland, in advance of the arrival of the Roman army. Jerusalem was now ringed on all sides by Roman divisions, military camps and fortifications (*BJ* 4.449–51, 490).

When news reached Vespasian that Emperor Nero had died on 9 June 68 CE, he decided to send Titus to pay homage to the new Emperor Galba and seek a mandate for the continuing prosecution of the War. Agrippa accompanied Titus on his journey to Rome (*BJ* 4.498). While at Corinth on their way to Italy, they heard that Galba had been assassinated after just seven months as emperor and was immediately succeeded by Otho (*BJ* 4.499; Suet., *Galba* 18.3, 19.1;

Tac., *Hist.* 2.1). Agrippa decided to continue his onward journey, but Titus sailed back to Syria to rejoin his father at Caesarea Maritima (*BJ* 4.501; Tac., *Hist.* 2.2). Tacitus, quoting gossip, which may possibly date from that time, states that Titus' sudden change of plan in returning to Caesarea Maritima was motivated by his love for Berenice, which had already blossomed. Titus would have met Berenice in 67 CE when Vespasian and he were resting at Caesarea Philippi with their troops at the conclusion of the Galilee campaign and the Flavian generals enjoying the hospitality of Agrippa at his palace there (Goodman 2012, 183). Berenice, then approaching 40, was about ten years older than Titus.³¹⁶

With civil war and uncertainty in Rome, Vespasian carried on with his campaign in Judaea, capturing those districts, including Acrabatene, in the hill country north of Jerusalem, that had not previously been brought under Roman control and establishing garrisons there. By the midsummer of 68 CE, his army reached the walls of Jerusalem (*BJ* 4.550–51). A detachment proceeded to Idumaea and its towns were captured one by one. Hebron, which resisted, was burned and all those who were found in the town were put to the sword. After that, other than Jerusalem, only the strongholds of Herodium, Masada and Machaerus still remained in rebel hands.³¹⁷

Simon son of Gioras, who had been kept outside Jerusalem, evaded the Roman troops operating in Idumaea and called on the remnants of the local population to seek refuge in Jerusalem (*BJ* 4.556). According to Josephus, John of Gischala and his Galilean Zealots, who were by then ascendant inside that city, were occupied in pillaging, raping and pursuing pleasure (*BJ* 4.557–65). His account is so laden with invective and hyperbole that it must be considered suspect. Josephus tells us that a split developed in John's army and his authority was challenged by the Idumaeans who had remained in Jerusalem. They also turned on the Zealots as a whole, obliging them to draw back into the Temple precincts (*BJ* 4.566–70). The Idumaeans and the moderate elements of the city's population convened a meeting with the chief priests and agreed to admit Simon son of Gioras and his men into the city. A member of a prestigious High Priestly family, Matthias son of Boethus,³¹⁸ was instructed to notify Simon of this decision (*BJ* 4.572–74; 5.527–28). This disclosure by Josephus is at variance with the general picture painted by him of the wholesale liquidation of the old Herodian and Sadducean élites by the Zealots.

In late spring of 69 CE, Simon and his men were duly admitted to Jerusalem and rapidly took control of the city, apart from the Temple Mount, which provided a defensive base for the followers of John and the Zealots, enabling them to stave off their new challenger (*BJ*

4.577–84). The control of Jerusalem was now split among three factions. According to Josephus, John of Gischala and his 6,000 followers held the outer precincts of the Temple and the northern part of the Lower City. A smaller splinter group of about 2,400 Zealots, headed by Eleazar son of Simon, was ensconced in the inner court of the Temple, while Simon son of Gioras, who led the largest number of combatants – numbering some 15,000, occupied the remainder of the Lower City as well as the entire Upper City. Simon's complement included a contingent of 5,000 Idumaeans, who had gone over to him.³¹⁹

Despite the military successes chalked up by Vespasian and Titus in the War up to this point, the upheavals afflicting Rome from the ending of Nero's Principate until the proclamation of Vespasian must have provided a considerable morale boost to the rebels. They would have viewed instability at the heart of the Empire as a manifestation of Roman weakness. Events such as the rebellion led by the governor of Gallia Lugdunensis, Gaius Julius Vindex, launched in March 68 CE, the proclamation of Galba as emperor two months later, the suicide of Nero in June and the tussle for succession that ensued must have raised their hopes considerably.³²⁰ Others desperate to shake off the Roman yolk seized their opportunity. Insurrections broke out that year in other far-flung corners of the Empire.³²¹ One occurred in northern Britain, where Venutius and his British allies staged a successful rebellion against his former wife, Cartimandua, Queen of the Brigantes and her Roman auxiliaries (Tac., *Hist.* 3.45). Another insurrection erupted in north-east Anatolia, led by Anicetus, the disgruntled former commander of the fleet of Polemo II of Pontus, who had been stripped of his client kingdom in Pontus by Nero in about 62/63 CE.³²² The year 69 CE also saw the revolt of the Batavi who lived on the lower Rhine, led by Gaius Julius Civilis, a Roman auxiliary officer and his Germanic confederates, which required nine Roman legions to put down and resulted in the destruction of two of them (Tac., *Hist.* 4.12–37, 54–79).

When Vespasian returned to Caesarea Maritima after campaigning in 69 CE, he and his army learnt that Otho had been overthrown and Vitellius had become emperor in Rome. Dissatisfied with this turn of events, his legions in Syria and Palestine proclaimed Vespasian emperor. Vespasian proceeded to widen his power base by establishing control of Egypt (*BJ* 4.588–606). Tiberius Julius Alexander willingly committed his province, together with the two legions stationed there, to Vespasian's cause. Legions elsewhere followed suit (*BJ* 4.616–21). Vespasian was able to count on the backing of four regional client kings, Sohaemus I of Emesa, Antiochus IV of Commagene, Malichus II of Nabataea and, of course, Agrippa II,

all of whose auxiliary forces were campaigning with him in Judaea (Tac., *Hist.* 2.81; 5.1).

On his arrival in Rome, Agrippa would have witnessed the unfolding events that included the toppling of both Otho and Vitellius, and then heard about the proclamation of Vespasian as the next emperor by Roman legions in Syria, Judaea and then Egypt (*BJ* 4.585–604). Agrippa received urgent communications, probably from his sister, Berenice, who had espoused the cause of Vespasian, requesting him to return home urgently. He quietly slipped out of Rome under the nose of Vitellius and hastened back to the Levant to join Titus, to whom Vespasian had passed command of the army for the continued prosecution of the war in Judaea (Tac., *Hist.* 2.81).

From this point, Josephus falls silent about Agrippa and his role in the ensuing military operations, including associated atrocities. Wilker puts this airbrushing of Agrippa's record by Josephus in the *Bellum* down to his desire to portray the king as a mediator and peace-maker and detached from the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.³²³ She suggests that the sanitising of Agrippa's reputation was done at the behest of the king, possibly to help his chances of being restored to a key role in the post-war reorganisation of Judaea, by being made more palatable to its Jewish population.

With Vespasian now on course to gain the Imperial mantle and the prediction of Josephus on the cusp of fulfilment, the Roman general took the decision, with the approval of his son Titus, to free Josephus from his fetters (*BJ* 4.622–29). Vespasian sent a force to Italy under the Legate for Syria, Gaius Licinius Mucianus, to wrest control of Italy from Vitellius (*BJ* 4.630–32). Mucianus was pipped to the post by Antonius Primus and the IIIrd Legion Gallica under his command, which had already sworn allegiance to Vespasian and had succeeded in reaching Rome from the Balkans, where they accomplished the deposition of Vitellius on 21 December 69 CE (*BJ* 4.633–53). On reaching the Imperial capital, Mucianus arranged for Domitian to serve as acting ruler pending the arrival of his father, Vespasian, as the new emperor (*BJ* 4.654–55). Vespasian, buoyed by felicitations received from every quarter, including from Rome's habitual foe, Parthia, sailed to Rome from Alexandria (*BJ* 7.21–22). Titus headed back to Caesarea Maritima, after seeing off his father in Alexandria, in order to complete the conquest of Jerusalem (*BJ* 4.656–63; Tac., *Hist.* 4.51).

Inside Jerusalem, the three-way contest for dominance greatly compromised the city's ability to withstand the Roman offensive. Moderate voices had been largely silenced by the elimination or departure of dissenting residents. Considerable physical damage was done through this civil strife and much of the valuable store of grain

and other foodstuffs were destroyed through arson during the infighting. This loss was irreparable because 68–69 CE was a sabbatical year, and therefore, it was hardly possible to replenish these provisions, even if the insurgents were able to break through the Roman cordon around Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.21–25; Tac., *Hist.* 5.12).

Titus advanced from Caesarea Maritima to Jerusalem at the head of the three legions previously led by his father (*BJ* 5.40–42). However, Vespasian had siphoned off some of their best soldiers for his march on Rome to topple Vitellius. The shortfall was filled by soldiers drafted from legions in Egypt (2,000 men) and Syria (3,000 men) (*BJ* 5.43–44). Titus' forces were further bolstered by the addition of the XIIth Legion Fulminata, which had earlier been under the command of Cestius Gallus, and primed to extract revenge for their earlier humiliation at the hands of the insurgents.³²⁴ The auxiliaries supplied and led by the Near-Eastern client kings, including Agrippa, totalled 15,000 men at full strength. Tiberius Julius Alexander was co-opted to serve as a senior staff officer to Titus as the legions and auxiliaries converged on Jerusalem from different directions (*BJ* 5.45–46).

The four legions established their main camps on Mt. Scopus and Mt. of Olives, overlooking Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.67–70). The insurgents attempted to unnerve the Roman forces ranged against them and raise morale in Jerusalem by launching surprise sorties against them (*BJ* 5.52–67, 71–97). At the same time, John of Gischala managed to seize control of the inner court of the Temple during the Passover festivities and acquire Eleazar's followers, reducing the number of Jewish factions to two.³²⁵ Titus tightened the noose around the city, bringing units of his army right up to the walls, while Josephus presented terms of surrender, which were spurned by the defenders (*BJ* 106–108, 114). The siege then commenced in earnest, with the main thrust from the north, where Jerusalem enjoyed least topographical advantage. The Third Wall, covering that flank, was the weakest section of Jerusalem's defences, because Agrippa I had left it incomplete, although the insurgent hastily tried to reinforce it.³²⁶ After 14 days, the Romans succeeded in penetrating this line and occupied Bezetha, the northernmost suburb, which lay between the Third and the Second Walls (see n. 232). The Second Wall had been built by Herod the Great from his three towers on the west side of the city eastwards to the Antonia fortress, at the north-west corner of the Temple compound (*BJ* 5.266–302), but its exact course has not been ascertained.³²⁷ The Romans proceeded to establish a new forward camp within the area of the conquered suburb (*BJ* 5.303). After two attempts, they managed to breach the Second Wall, bringing them forward to the heart of the city, where they were forced to engage in hand-to-hand fighting as they proceeded through its warren of narrow

lanes (*BJ* 5.331–47).

Titus then temporarily halted the military operations before attempting to breach the First Wall further south. He had hoped that his success in penetrating Jerusalem's defences and the prospects of severe hunger, now that the defenders were entirely cut off from the rest of the country, would weaken their resolve to continue the fight. Titus paraded his fully-armed troops, along with their lethal siege equipment, in full view of the inhabitants who watched the proceedings with dread from the First Wall and the north wall of the Temple enclosure (*BJ* 5.348–61).

Amid this fearsome display and placing himself within earshot of the crowd, Josephus implored the inhabitants to spare their country and Temple by capitulating to Rome (*BJ* 5.362–419). He reminded them that the Romans 'reverenced the holy places of their enemies' and had thus far refrained from harming them. He warned his audience to be mindful of the might of Rome and 'that God was on the Roman side'. Citing episodes from Jewish history, he pointed out that their nation only succeeded when they were obedient to God, but that the offences that had been committed by recent generations deprived the Jews of any hope of victory against Rome. While the insurgents were unmoved by Josephus' appeal, many of the civilian inhabitants were encouraged to desert Jerusalem by Titus, who gave them the chance to leave without penalty (*BJ* 5.420–23).

For those who remained in the city, life became increasingly precarious. The well-to-do were stripped of their remaining property and imprisoned, including the parents of Josephus, and many were put to death on suspicion of hostile sympathies and attempting to desert (*BJ* 5.424, 527–33, 544–45). There was also an increasing struggle to procure sustenance as famine took hold in the city. According to Josephus, the desperate struggle to procure food resulted in ugly scenes of violence, not only between factions, but even between individuals within the same family (*BJ* 5.425–45). Those driven by desperation to abandon Jerusalem from then on were caught by Titus' men, tortured and crucified close to the ramparts in the hope that this cruel spectacle might frighten the defenders and induce them to capitulate. The insurgents responded by executing the relatives of deserters on the city walls. Such terror tactics only intensified the suffering of the inhabitants (*BJ* 5.446–59).

Meanwhile, the Romans reinforced their cordon around the unconquered portion of Jerusalem with substantial earthworks. The insurgents made strenuous efforts to undermine this noose and destroy the Roman siege engines by direct assault and make incursions on the Roman camps beyond. This counter-offensive demoralised the Roman legionaries (*BJ* 5.473–90). Titus and his officers took stock of the

situation and decided to construct a stronger circumvallation, reinforced by forts at regular intervals to achieve a hermetic blockade.³²⁸ There was now hardly any chance of escape from the city and mass starvation took a heavy toll among those who remained within (*BJ* 5.512–18). The new siege works proved effective in preventing further sorties of rebel parties and lifted Roman morale, but still the insurgents held fast, although an unsuccessful plot was hatched by a deputy of Simon son of Gioras to surrender Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.519–26, 534–40). A few determined souls who managed to escape were caught and disembowelled by ‘Syrian’ and Arab soldiers, after it was discovered that one of the deserters had swallowed gold coins before abandoning the city. On learning of these abhorrent incidents, Titus undertook to stamp out this practice (*BJ* 5.550–61).

While going about his rounds beyond the walls, exhorting his countrymen to capitulate, Josephus was struck on the head by a stone and briefly concussed, but was saved from further harm by a rescue party sent by Titus (*BJ* 5.541–43, 546–47). This incident calls to mind the injury suffered by Agrippa II from a similar projectile during Vespasian’s siege of Gamala in the autumn of 67 CE, while attempting to parley with the rebels holding that town (*BJ* 4.14).

If Agrippa and Josephus had not had the opportunity to meet earlier, they would have made their personal acquaintance at this time in a Roman camp outside the walls of Jerusalem.³²⁹

Inside the city, having robbed the residents of their valuables, John of Gischala took to melting down Temple vessels and appurtenances of precious metal.³³⁰ No exception was made for the precious items that had been donated by Augustus and Livia during the reign of Herod the Great.³³¹ He distributed to his partisans the consecrated wine and oil that had been set aside for the Temple rituals (*BJ* 5.562–66). Meanwhile, Titus learned that his siege was taking an enormous toll of human life inside the city through starvation, resulting in so many corpses that it was impossible for the dead to be given any kind of dignified burial (*BJ* 5.567–72).

The Romans completed their system of earthworks around the city and created a cordon sanitaire by clearing the area around the city of foliage and structures to a distance of 90 stades (over 16 km), enabling them to further isolate the defenders and frustrate sorties mounted from the city (*BJ* 5.523; 6.5, 15–22). Towards the end of July 70 CE, the Romans directed their offensive on the Antonia fortress. No sooner had they succeeded in breaching its outer wall, they were met by another wall immediately behind it that John and his men had constructed.³³² Titus urged his soldiers not to be disheartened but to press on with their assault. After four days of bitter fighting, Roman soldiers managed to scale the inner wall and

seize the Antonia (*BJ* 6.33–70). The rebels retreated to the Temple and the Romans attempted to move the battleground forward into the hallowed precincts but were driven back to the Antonia, where they were held up for some time (*BJ* 6.71–92). To remove the remaining obstacles, Titus ordered his troops to raze the Antonia, so as to provide open access to the Temple Mount.

It was at this time, during August 70 CE, that sacrifices in the Temple ceased altogether.³³³ The Roman commander sent Josephus to broadcast in Hebrew (or Aramaic) a message to John of Gischala to come out of the city with his men and face their opponents without endangering Jerusalem and its Sanctuary (*BJ* 6.93–110). We are told that his call was spurned by John and his followers, but there were many members of the upper class, belonging to the priesthood and aristocracy, who heeded Josephus' plea and some managed to escape to the Roman lines (*BJ* 6.111–15). They included two former High Priests, Joseph Cabi and Jesus son of Damnaeus, the three sons of the High Priest Ishmael (most likely Ishmael son of Phiabi, mentioned in *AJ* 18.34; 20.179, 194–95) and a son of the High Priest, Matthias son of Boethus, who had been put to death together with three of his other sons by Simon son of Gioras (*BJ* 5.530–31). Titus received these fugitives with courtesy and advised them to move to Gophna³³⁴ until the conclusion of the war, when they would have their property restored to them. The rebels circulated misinformation that these deserters had been slaughtered by the Romans in order to stem the exodus from Jerusalem, but that ploy misfired when Titus brought these men back from Gophna and had them join Josephus outside the city walls in imploring the remaining inhabitants of Jerusalem to open the gates of the city to the Roman army. These appeals only made the stubborn militants dig in their heels, denouncing the defectors and firing barrages of projectiles at the besiegers (*BJ* 6.116–20).

Figure 7.2 The breach in the southern town wall of Gamala viewed from the outside.

*Figure 7.3 A secondary wall, constructed of fieldstones, is seen against the inner face of the town wall of Gamala where it had been breached. This practice was also employed by the Jewish defenders of Jerusalem, as described by Josephus (*BJ* 6.31).*

Angered by the rebels using the Temple precincts as a fortress, Titus urged them to spare the Sanctuary from the fighting, promising that he would respect its inviolability, but to no avail, so the Romans resumed their assault with renewed vigour (*BJ* 6.121–30). Led by

Sextus Cerealis Vettulenus, commander of the Vth Legion Macedonica, a team of experienced soldiers, handpicked by Titus was tasked to descend on the Temple precincts in the middle of the night and surprise the guards, who were expected to be asleep (*BJ* 6.131–35). The guards, though, were alert and responded promptly to this encroachment. In the darkness, there was confusion among the opposing groups of fighters, resulting in many cases of mistaken ‘blue on blue’ casualties, and the clash, which lasted for eight hours, resulted in stalemate. We are told that the combatants on the rebel side were made up of partisans of all the factions, namely those of Simon son of Gioras and John of Gischala, as well as the Idumaeans and other Zealot groups (*BJ* 6.92; 136–48).

In parallel, the Romans constructed a series of four ramps to the raised platform of the Temple Mount and its encompassing walls, from the north and west.³³⁵ This was a laborious task because the necessary timbers had to be transported thither from a distance of 100 stades (approximately 18 km) away, because the surroundings of Jerusalem had been stripped bare of trees in the creation of the cordon sanitaire.³³⁶ The Romans also had to contend with reckless sorties by rebels outside the walls (*BJ* 6.149–63). The insurgents sought to ameliorate their defensive position by setting fire to and destroying the north-west sections of the outer portico of the Temple enclosure (*temenos*) that had connected with the destroyed Antonia. According to Josephus, by this act they were responsible for starting the conflagration that eventually engulfed the Sanctuary. In any case, both sides continued destroying the outer porticoes as their fight for control intensified (*BJ* 6.164–76). A lethal stratagem applied by the defenders resulted in a heavy loss of Roman troops. They packed the space between the rafters and ceiling of the northern section of the western portico of the Temple enclosure with dry tinder soaked with bitumen and pitch and set it alight. The rebels then withdrew, luring Roman soldiers to advance along the flat roof of that portico, where they were trapped by the flames and perished to a man (*BJ* 6.177–91). The following day, the Romans responded by burning down the entire north portico, up to the eastern corner (*BJ* 6.192).

Meanwhile, bottled up inside the shrunk confines of city, the inhabitants were succumbing to the ravages of famine, which Josephus describes in graphic detail (*BJ* 6.193–219). Reports of a case of human cannibalism borne out of desperation reached the ears of Titus, which strengthened his resolve to press on. Having completed the construction of their earth-filled ramps, the Roman legionaries brought up their siege engines in an effort to breach the Temple enclosure from the west, but that had little effect against the sturdy ashlar walls. They were also rebuffed when they attempted to force an

entry by scaling ladders, so Titus redirected their efforts to the gates and porticoes, ordering his men to burn them down so as to freely access the interior of the Temple enclosure (*BJ* 6.228, 232–35).

Titus convened a war council with his senior commanders to decide on the fate of the Temple and, according to Josephus, the Roman commander persuaded his colleagues that they should try to spare the magnificent edifice (*BJ* 6.236–43). However, there is a contrary account of the decision taken by Titus, which was that the Temple should be destroyed without delay, probably because he saw it as lying at the root of Jewish opposition to Roman rule. This variant account survives in a 4th century CE chronicle by a Christian writer, Sulpicius Severus (*Chron.* 2.30.6–7), but is believed to be based on a lost work of Tacitus.³³⁷ On this point, many scholars suspect that Josephus deliberately strayed from the official Roman records in his account so as to clear Titus of culpability in the destruction of the Temple and rather emphasise his ‘clemency’. There are several other examples of Josephus’ efforts to underline the leniency of Titus, some of which have already been noted. In a digression slightly earlier in Book 6 of the *Bellum*, Josephus remarks on the desertion of two leading rebels, who Titus allowed to go free, despite the fact that their hands were soaked in blood (*BJ* 6.229–31).

Where was Agrippa II at this crucial moment? We are not told anything at all by Josephus or any other source, and yet the king had a longstanding commitment to the well-being of the Temple. For more than a decade and a half, he had been its official custodian and guardian. He also had his own auxiliary force, which ought to have been at his disposal to flush out the insurgents holding the sacred precincts and possibly remove the pretext for Roman troops to mount an assault on the Temple. This is an issue that has been considered by Goodman (2012, 188–89), who points out that Agrippa’s father had managed to help frustrate the crazy scheme of Caligula to desecrate the Temple in 40 CE, so might one not expect Agrippa and Berenice to use their close personal ties with Titus to save the Temple?³³⁸ However, as we know, Agrippa II lacked the incisive qualities of Agrippa senior and the circumstances were altogether different. A fierce battle was raging and it is far more difficult for a lesser player with limited resources at his disposal to influence events. All the same, it is surprising that there is no record of Agrippa making any attempt to secure protection for the Sanctuary during the storming of the Temple Mount.

Despite desperate efforts by the insurgents to stave off the Roman assault on the Inner Temple, the unrelenting Roman onslaught wore them down and, after holding back several charges, they were forced to give way, permitting Roman legionaries to penetrate the Inner

Court on the 10th day of the month of Ab.³³⁹ We are told that one of the soldiers seized a lit timber and flung it through an aperture of one of the storerooms on the north side of the Sanctuary, which started a conflagration in the building, no doubt exacerbated by a large quantity of combustible material that was stored there (*BJ* 6.244–53). Josephus maintains that, when he learnt of the fire that had broken out, he ordered that it be extinguished, but that his instructions were drowned out by the hubbub and confusion. While the fire was raging among the storerooms that abutted three sides of the Inner Sanctum, Titus and members of his general staff entered the Sanctuary and were deeply impressed by the magnificence that they beheld (*BJ* 6.254–60).

On account of the thick ashlar walls of the Sanctuary, the fire might have been restricted to the storage chambers, but then an impetuous soldier tossed a firebrand into the interior of the Inner Sanctum, spreading the fire to engulf the entire building. Insurgents stationed on the roof tore up the spikes that had protected the building from bird droppings and hurled them at the Roman soldiers, but to no avail. So, many of the defenders forced their way from the Inner Temple to the Outer Court and thence to the Upper City to participate in the final stand of their compatriots in Jerusalem (*BJ* 6.261–80).

As the Sanctuary was being consumed by fire, the Romans decided to destroy the rest of the Temple complex – what remained of the porticoes and gates, apart from two, one on the east and the other on the south³⁴⁰ – and the chambers housing the treasury, which they must have completely emptied beforehand. In the course of this wrecking activity, Josephus says that 6,000 refugees who had sought shelter in one of the porticoes of the outer court that was set alight perished in consequence (*BJ* 6.281–87). With the entire Temple complex put to the torch, the legionaries brought in their standards and set them up opposite the eastern gate of the Inner Temple, then offered up sacrifices in front of their insignia, while loudly hailing Titus as Emperor (*BJ* 6.316; Suet., *Titus* 5.2).

Titus was now in no mood for magnanimity. Some priests, who had sought shelter on the roof of the Sanctuary capitulated and were taken before Titus. He rebuffed their pleas for clemency, saying that it was now too late and ordered their summary execution. The rebel leaders, Simon and John, made a call from the Upper City for a parley with Titus (*BJ* 6.370–73, 402, 429–30). The Roman general offered to spare their lives if they surrendered, but they were only willing to concede the Upper City if they were granted free passage with their families through Roman lines and escape to the wilderness beyond. Titus flatly refused that request and instead gave permission to his troops to sack and burn the city, which they undertook with relish, starting with the Lower City and Tyropoeon Valley.³⁴¹ Eminent

citizens who gave themselves up were taken into custody, among them the kinsmen of King Izates of Adiabene, who had participated in the revolt. The latter were afterwards brought to Rome in chains as hostages to secure the allegiance of their kingdom to Rome (*BJ* 6.321–57).

The remaining insurgents relocated to Herod's palace, allegedly killing all those who had been sheltering there, mostly people with property who had been attracted to that location because its spacious grounds afforded shelter for them and their possessions. Two Roman soldiers who found themselves trapped in the besieged city and had hidden in the palace were captured by the insurgents: one was executed and the other managed to slip away (*BJ* 6.358–62). Meanwhile, the Romans had razed the Lower City to the ground all the way south to Siloam but were disappointed to find that their foes had stripped the area of everything of value before withdrawing to the Upper City (*BJ* 6.363–64). Josephus claims that he never stopped remonstrating with the rebels to lay down their arms and limit the destruction, but they repeatedly turned a deaf ear to him and allowed the fighting to rage on (*BJ* 6.365–69). Nothing is said about Agrippa or any attempt by him to stem the death and destruction. As a last resort, the rebels retreated to underground passages, mostly drainage channels and sewers, in the hope of surviving there until the Roman army moved on, but the Roman troops mercilessly hunted them down.³⁴²

In early September 70 CE, the Romans set about that final task in purging Jerusalem totally of hostile elements. The four legions constructed earthworks on timber foundations against the walls on the west side opposite Herod's palace and around the rest of the Upper City. Seeing the futility of further resistance, the leaders of the Idumaeen combatants covertly dispatched five representatives to Titus to negotiate terms of surrender. The rebel leaders got wind of this intended betrayal and Simon immediately had the five Idumaeen emissaries put to death, while he arrested and imprisoned their leaders in Jerusalem (*BJ* 6.374–81). The growing mood of demoralisation resulted in a growing stream of defectors. Of these, Titus allowed uninvolved citizens of Jerusalem to remain free, but others who had come to the city to participate in the War as combatants, along with their womenfolk and children, were sold into slavery (*BJ* 6.382–86). A surviving priest, Jesus son of Thebuti, delivered up to Titus fabulous treasure from the Temple, which he had taken charge of, in exchange for a pardon. This included two lampstands (*menoroth*), tables, bowls and platters, all of solid gold, as well as the Temple veils, the High Priest's vestments with the precious stones of the breastplate (*ephod*), along with other ceremonial

artefacts and sacred ornaments.³⁴³

The earthworks encircling the Upper City were completed in the space of 18 days. The Romans then brought up their siege engines, and before long the battering rams breached the remaining rebel defences and Roman soldiers poured into the Upper City. Rather than retreating to the security of the three massive towers built by Herod adjacent to his palace (*BJ* 5.161–76), the rebel leaders sought refuge in an underground passage, while the Roman soldiers massacred many of those that they encountered, combatants and civilians alike. Now with the entire city in their hands, the Roman troops raised their standards on the three towers, which were preserved as a memorial by Titus to his good fortune. He demolished the rest of what remained of the city, only leaving the western portion of the city walls standing, to shelter the camp of the garrison that was to remain (*BJ* 6.392–413; 7.1–3). The ruins of the city were carefully combed for gold, silver and other trove, much of it recovered using information extracted from prisoners (*BJ* 7.115).

Titus ordered all those captured with weapons on them to be killed, along with the elderly and infirm. Able-bodied prisoners were rounded up and herded into the Court of the Women in the Temple, where they were divided up and assigned different fates, either to be enslaved, or killed in the arenas. The most handsome youths were reserved for the triumphal procession in Rome. A large number were allowed to starve to death. Josephus claims that over a million Jews perished in the siege of Jerusalem in combat, civil disorder and famine, the number swollen by the large number who had come to the Holy City on the last Passover pilgrimage and were trapped there. He states that he derived his estimate from a census carried out for Cestius Gallus by the chief priests during the Passover season (*BJ* 6.420–22). Josephus also asserts that the total number of prisoners taken throughout the entire War amounted to 97,000. Both John of Gischala and Simon son of Gioras were caught alive and taken back to Rome as captives (*BJ* 6.433; 7.25–36). Simon was apprehended amidst the ruins of the Temple, where he suddenly appeared as if by magic, garbed in a white tunic and sporting a purple mantle in regal style.³⁴⁴

After three days of victory celebrations and awards made to soldiers for distinguished service, Titus distributed some of the booty and then dispersed the XIIth Legion to Melitene on the upper Euphrates. The Xth Legion remained as a garrison in the ruined city, while Titus took the Vth and XVth Legions with him to Caesarea Maritima, where he deposited the bulk of his booty and then continued on to Caesarea Philippi, Agrippa's capital.

While there he threw magnificent games to celebrate the conquest of Jerusalem (*BJ* 7.23–24), Agrippa would have been present in his

capital, as host to the Roman victors who revelled in gruesome spectacles, among them watching Jewish captives being devoured by wild beasts and forced to engage one another in mortal combat for entertainment. Shortly afterwards, at Caesarea Maritima, in October 70 CE, Titus celebrated the 18th birthday of his younger brother, Domitian, in style, during which the rebel leader Simon son of Gioras, who had only recently been captured, was brought to him in chains. At these festivities, more than 2,500 Jewish prisoners were killed in the arena in a similarly brutal fashion (*BJ* 7.37–38).

A month later, a further slaughter of captives was stage-managed in Berytus, as part of the celebrations held there to mark Vespasian's 61st birthday, perhaps on an even larger scale (*BJ* 7.39–40). From there, he proceeded to Antioch (*BJ* 7.41). On his progress through Syria, he ordered similar displays of slaughter of prisoners for the entertainment of the population which fêted the Roman victor and his legions (*BJ* 7.96). From Syria, Titus travelled to Egypt, pausing at Jerusalem to reflect on its destruction, according to Josephus, without any expression of triumphalism (*BJ* 7.112–13). Early 71 CE saw Titus in Alexandria, where he separated from the two legions which had accompanied him, sending the Vth back to their base in Moesia, which covered much of the Balkans, and the XVth Apollinaris to Pannonia, which included the upper Danube (*BJ* 7.116–17).

On his arrival in Rome that year with his entourage, captives and other spoils, a triumph for Vespasian and Titus was organised. That triumph and the severe treatment meted out to the Jews by Vespasian and Titus during and after the War only makes sense if Judaea was considered to have wrested free of Rome's control and had to be conquered afresh.³⁴⁵ Indeed, the striking of coins bearing the legend IVDAEA CAPTA provides further clear evidence that the creation of a separate province of Judaea was the result of the Flavian conquest of a sovereign territory rather than one in which an internal provincial rebellion had been suppressed. It was only from this point on that a legion (the Xth Fretensis) was permanently assigned to Judaea. As a fully-fledged Roman province, Judaea was now assigned a governor of senatorial rank. The first appointee was Sextus Cerialis Vettulenus, who had commanded the Vth Legion Macedonica at the siege of Jerusalem.³⁴⁶ Soon thereafter, sometime in 71 CE, he was replaced by Sextus Lucilius Bassus.³⁴⁷

The triumph, which was held in June that year, exactly a century after Octavian's triumph over Antony in 29 BCE, is described in detail by Josephus, who is likely to have witnessed the spectacle.³⁴⁸ As was customary, the main public event, the victory procession, started at the Porta Triumphalis in the Campus Martius and proceeded southwards through the Forum Boarium to the Circus Maximus.³⁴⁹ It

then swung around the Palatine hill and swept past the east side of the Forum Romanum. Finally, it ascended the Capitoline, ending in front of the venerable Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.³⁵⁰ Cheering crowds lined the route, although Josephus no doubt exaggerated in saying that the entire population Rome attended the Triumph (*BJ* 7.122). Vespasian and Titus, the *triumphatores*, were clad in purple robes and crowned with laurel leaves. They rode forth in separate gilded chariots, each carrying an eagle-tipped sceptre in one hand and a laurel branch in the other. Domitian, also in magnificent apparel, accompanied them on a steed.³⁵¹ This scene is vividly captured on an aureus struck in Lugdunum (Lyon) the same year.³⁵² On its reverse is a depiction of Vespasian standing in a quadriga, with a laurel branch and sceptre, preceded by a trumpeter, a soldier and a captive, perhaps intended to represent Simon son of Gioras, who was led in chains in the procession. To highlight the significance of the occasion, Vespasian is shown being crowned by a winged Victory. The northern relief panel inside the Arch of Titus, which was erected a decade later, features the triumph of Titus.³⁵³ Josephus makes much of the floats commemorating exploits in the War and splendid items of loot that were carried in the parade; undoubtedly the most sensational items among the latter were the Temple treasures, especially the gold seven-branched *menorah*, which was unlike any lampstand that had been seen previously in Rome, and the gold table of the showbread (*BJ* 7.148–49). These particular treasures are given pride of place in the depiction of the procession on the southern relief panel of the Arch of Titus.³⁵⁴ When the procession arrived in front of its destination, the Capitoline temple, there was a pause while the vanquished enemy leader, identified as Simon son of Gioras, was scourged and ceremonially executed. That act was followed by thanksgiving sacrifices and prayers in the temple conducted by the Flavian Emperor and his sons. They and those favoured among their entourage then proceeded to the Imperial palace on the Palatine hill for a celebratory banquet. As for John of Gischala, he was sentenced to incarceration for life in Rome (*BJ* 6.434).

Titus had left Judaea with the three important southern fortresses still remaining in rebel hands. Sextus Lucilius Bassus was tasked with capturing those strongholds and bringing the War to a conclusion. Herodium, about 4 km south-east of Jerusalem, capitulated without offering much resistance.³⁵⁵ Bassus gathered together his troops for an assault on Machaerus, overlooking the Dead Sea from the east, in 72/73 CE (*BJ* 7.164–77). The Roman soldiers began constructing a circumvallation in preparation for a long siege (see n. 328), but after one of the defenders was captured, scourged and prepared for crucifixion in full view of the defenders, the latter capitulated in

exchange for the release of their comrade and safe passage through the Roman lines (*BJ* 7.197–209). The remaining residents of the appended lower town, not covered by the agreement, were less fortunate and were enslaved. Bassus and his troops then proceeded to the forest of Jarden, in the nearby Jordan valley, where many fugitives from Jerusalem and Machaerus had sought refuge. The Romans surrounded the forest and, despite putting up a desperate fight, 3,000 fugitives were slaughtered there, so we are informed (*BJ* 7.210–17).

In about 72/73 CE, Bassus died and the next governor, Lucius Flavius Silva set about the conquest of Masada.³⁵⁶ The fortress was occupied by about 1,000 fugitives and *sicarii*, headed by Eleazar son of Jairus, who had gained control there early in the War. Built on the lofty summit of a rock outcrop with precipitous slopes and surrounded by stone walls, the fortress was difficult to assail, even with the siege machines of the time. The Xth Legion, supplemented by auxiliaries under Silva, placed Masada under a tight cordon, consisting of a circumvallation strengthened with a series of forts, which can still be seen today.³⁵⁷ On a shallower spur on the western side, the troops constructed an assault ramp of packed stones, rubble and earth held together by timber planks (see n. 336). Then they mounted a siege tower on top of the ramp, which breached the wall at that point, and hurled ballista balls into the fortress.³⁵⁸ A barricade built by the defenders using large wooden beams (presumably purloined from Herod the Great's palaces at Masada) to prevent entry by the Roman troops was destroyed by fire (*BJ* 7.311–19). When Eleazar realised that further resistance would be futile, Josephus tells us that he addressed his comrades in two long speeches. Eleazar convinced his men to enter into a suicide pact, killing their families and, then finally, themselves (*BJ* 7.320–98). When the Romans entered the fortress, they found only seven survivors, two women and five children, who had hidden in a rock-cut cistern (*BJ* 7.399–406).

With the fall of Masada in the spring of 73/74 CE,³⁵⁹ the Roman victory was complete and the Judaean-Roman War was at an end. It had been a very bitter and brutal conflict, more than the epic siege of Jerusalem plus a few lesser clashes and skirmishes that Mason would have us believe.³⁶⁰ This war was more destructive and lasted longer than any other provincial war or rebellion in the 1st century CE and was the only one during that period in which the insurgents struck their own patriotic coinage in defiance of Rome. For the Jews, the War resulted in an unmitigated catastrophe. Their ancient capital and spiritual centre had been effectively obliterated. There was no consolation to be had from their crushing defeat.³⁶¹ Its devastating impact on the Jewish people resulted in a smouldering resentment, which rekindled two further rebellions, in the diaspora during the

reign of Trajan (115–117 CE) and again in Judaea, under the leadership of Simon Bar Kokhba (132–135 CE), whose struggle against the legions of Hadrian persisted into a fourth year, once again accompanied by the minting of rebel coinage.³⁶²

Agrippa had played no mediation role worthy of mention during the latter stages of the War, and turned his back on the fate of the Jews, whether in Judaea itself, or in the diaspora, where there were outbreaks of disorder among the Jews of Alexandria and Cyrene.³⁶³ When Titus arrived in Antioch after the War, he was petitioned by its citizens to order the expulsion of the Jews from their city, where they had lived for centuries (*BJ* 7.100–108). The Roman commander dealt with this matter on his own, firmly rejecting their request. Titus shrewdly argued that:

their own country to which as Jews, they ought in that case to be banished, has been destroyed, and no other place would now receive them.

(*BJ* 7.109)

Not taking no for an answer, the citizenry then petitioned Titus to strip Antioch's Jews of their civic rights, which he again refused to countenance (*BJ* 7.110–11; *AJ* 12.121–24). A similar request by the Alexandrians met with a rebuff from Titus, too (*AJ* 12.121–24). During these attempts to deprive the Jews of Antioch and Alexandria of their privileges, Agrippa was conspicuous by his absence.

²⁵⁹ *BJ* 3.29; for a revised chronology, see Kokkinos 1998, 327 n. 209.

²⁶⁰ For biographies of Vespasian, see Levick 2017; Vervaeke 2016. Vespasian's campaigning in Britain is described in Levick (op. cit., 16–23).

²⁶¹ Levick 2017, 22–27.

²⁶² For biographies of Titus, see Murison 2016; Jones 1984.

²⁶³ *V* 407–408. There was substance to the accusations of the Tyrians because Philip, as Agrippa's senior commander with the loyalists, who had sought refuge in Herod's palace together with the members of Jerusalem's Roman garrison in Jerusalem, had abandoned the latter to their cruel fate at the hands of Eleazar and his rebels (*BJ* 2.437–40). On the accusation of disloyalty made against Philip before Agrippa II some time earlier, while the king was in Berytus, see *V* 182. If Philip's destination was Rome, he would have found that Nero was away in Greece and the capital in the grip of a civil war, so he returned to Agrippa without accomplishing his mission (*V* 409).

²⁶⁴ The Xth Fretensis, the Vth Macedonica and the XVth Apollinaris.

²⁶⁵ For Antiochus IV and Sohaemus I, see nn. 8 and 160, respectively. On Malichus II (40–70 CE), son and successor to Aretas IV, see Bowersock 1983, 63, 69–72, 74 (family relationships); Kropp 2013b, 63–65 (coin portraiture), 289 (dedicatory inscriptions to Malichus II, his wife Shuqaylah and daughter Shu'dah at Petra). A succinct history of Nabataea and its monarchy from 100 BCE to 100 CE, with numerous references, is presented in Kropp 2013b, 39–43; 371–82.

266 *BJ* 3.8, 64–69. Each of the three legions numbered about 6,120 men (18,360 in all). Josephus tells us that ten of the cohorts from Caesarea Maritima, Sebaste (Samaria) and Syria had 1,000 infantry men each and the remaining 13 comprised 600 infantry and 120 cavalry (19,360 in total). The auxiliaries contributed by three of the client kings each comprised 2,000 unmounted archers and 1,000 cavalry (9,000 in total), while Malichus II supplied a larger auxiliary contingent of 1,000 cavalry and 5,000 infantry, mainly archers (6,000 in all). If the ten *alae* of cavalry mentioned each contained 500 men (5,000 in all), then the grand total adds up to 57,720, which rounds up to the 60,000 mentioned. On the participation of the four allies, see also Tac., *Hist.* 5.1. Tacitus quantifies their contribution as 20 cohorts, which would only amount to 10,000 and fall short of the 15,000 indicated by Josephus. Cassius Dio (66.4.2) mentions that there were many slingers as well as archers in these cohorts. On the military equipment of the Roman and allied forces, found at (1) Gamala, see Holley 2014; Magness 2014; Stiebel 2014; (2) Herodium, see Stiebel 2015; (3) Masada, see Holley 1994; Stiebel and Magness 2007. Among the items represented among these finds, arrow heads are abundant and there is also archery tackle.

267 On ‘Arabeh (‘Arab in Rabbinic sources), see Rappaport 2013, 44 n. 2.

268 *BJ* 3.141–288, 316–22. On Jotapata and its excavated remains, see Aviam 2015; 2008, 6*–14*; 2002. The character of this hill-top settlement has been brought to light: the domestic buildings that have been uncovered include a mansion adorned with frescoes in the second Pompeian style, comparable to those encountered in houses of the late Second Temple period in Jerusalem and Gamala. The recent archaeological findings have shed light on the social structure of the town and Jewish religious observance (ritual baths and use of ‘reusable’ stone vessels). They have also confirmed Josephus’ assertion that a protective wall was constructed around Jotapata (at his behest) and also some of the details he gives about the Roman assault, including the siege ramp built by the legions against its north side. Evidence of the carnage resulting from the fierce resistance put up by defenders is conspicuous in terms of the human remains that have been found.

269 The father of the future emperor Trajan. His family origins were in Umbria, Italy but he was born in Italica, a Roman colony in Spain. Before serving as Legate of the Xth Legion Fretensis in the Judaean-Roman War, he had probably reached the rank of Praetor in his *cursus honorum* and been posted to Baetica as Proconsul. As a reward for his military accomplishments in the War, Vespasian awarded Traianus a suffect consulship in September and October of 70 CE (Gallivan 1981, 187). His appointment as governor of Cappadocia followed (70/71 CE). He then served as Roman legate for Syria from 73 to c. 76–78 CE; see *RPC* 2, nos. 2008, 2012–13 (76/77 CE). During his time there, Traianus rebuffed a Parthian invasion under Vologases I. His senatorial career was crowned in 79 CE, with his appointment as Proconsul of Roman Asia CE; see Bennett 2001, 12–20; Dąbrowa 1993, 23–24.

270 Japha is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible as Japhia (Josh. 19.12). It is identified with the modern town of Yafa an-Nasariyye (‘Jaffa by Nazareth’), which is now part of the Nazareth conurbation.

271 *BJ* 3.340–408. In the Babylonian Talmud (*b.Gittin* 56a–b), the prophecy that Vespasian would become Roman Emperor was credited to the Jewish sage (*tanna*), Yoḥanan ben Zakkai.

272 Mount Gerizim at Shechem (modern Nablus) is the most sacred site of the Samaritans, where their temple had stood, until it was laid waste along with the city by the Hasmonaean ruler, John Hyrcanus I, in c. 110 BCE; see Magen 2008.

273 In the Judaean-Roman War, Cerealis was the Legate of the Vth Legion Macedonica. He remained as the head of the garrison left in Jerusalem at the end of the War (*BJ*

- 7.163). After the fall of Jerusalem Cerealis was appointed governor of Judaea (in 70–71 CE). He appears in a military diploma dated to 75 CE (*RMD* 1.2) and in an inscription dated to 78 CE (*CIL* 16.22). Subsequent offices he held include the governorship of Moesia in 74–75 (Eck 1982, 293–300). He was appointed Proconsul of the province on Africa in 83–84 CE (*ibid.*, 307). On Cerealis Vettulenus, see also Dąbrowa 1993, 27–28; Mason 2001, 167 n. 1732.
- 274 *BJ* 3.450–52. On the different forms of that Jesus’ father’s name in the manuscripts, see Mason 2016, 401 n. 3056.
- 275 Kokkinos 1998, 234–35 and n. 105.
- 276 Schürer 1973, 352–53 n. 42.
- 277 Indeed, a synagogue of late Roman date has been unearthed there. On Hammath Tiberias, see Savage 2015.
- 278 *V* 277, 293. The term used by Josephus here is *proseuchē*, usually meaning ‘oratory’, which Schürer (1979, 439–40) translates as ‘meeting house’. This Greek term is used as an alternative for *synagōgē* in Acts 16.13, 16. For *proseuchē* and other terms used for Jewish houses of prayer and assembly by Josephus, see Krause 2017, 7–8.
- 279 *V* 277–80, 295–300; see Levine 2005, 75. On the origin of the synagogue as a Jewish institution, its administration and function, and also what we are able to learn about the synagogue from the writings of Josephus, see Krause 2017. For an analysis of Josephus’ account of the synagogue in Tiberias, in particular, see Krause 2017, 130–44.
- 280 Mason 2016, 341–43; Cytryn-Silverman 2015. The ancient city was located to the south of the modern town centre.
- 281 In fact, the second function of the early synagogue of Tiberias as a *bouleutērion* seems to have been memorialised in the name of a later counterpart during the Talmudic period as the synagogue of the ‘boule’ (*y.Sheq.* 7.5, 50c; *y.Ta’an.* 1.2, 64a). Synagogues dating from the late Second Temple period, at Masada, Herodium and Gamala are architecturally similar to a type of *ekklesiastērion* (council house for the assembly of citizens) of the Hellenistic period, found at Priene, Heracleia by Latmus and Notium in Asia Minor, being of rectangular shape and having tiers of stone benches built against the walls and ranged around a central space – compare [Figure 7.1](#), also Levine 2005, 54–55 and fig. 4 (synagogue at Gamala), *idem*, 61–63 and figs. 6–7 (synagogue at Masada) with Lawrence 1996, 201–202 and figs. 352–53 (*ekklesiastērion* at Priene).
- 282 *BJ* 2.639; *V* 65–66; 69; 296. *Prōtoi* (literally ‘principal men’) is just one of several Greek words used by Josephus to describe the non-priestly élite of Jewish communities (see Mason 2008, 256 n. 2085). Mason prefers to call them ‘powerful men’.
- 283 *BJ* 2.618; 3.539; *V* 92; 331. Meagre remains of the early Roman stadium, presumably built by the city’s founder, Herod Antipas, have been uncovered on the north side of the ancient city; see Cytryn-Silverman 2015, 196. There was also a theatre, which has come to light on the lower slopes of Mount Berenice; see Atrash 2012.
- 284 *V* 34. In other words, they were members of the party of ‘Herodians’ mentioned in Mark 3.6, 12.13; Matt. 22.16.
- 285 Julius and Capellus are common Latin names; Antyllus was the *cognomen* of the eldest son of Mark Antony by his third wife Fulvia. See Mason 2001, 61 n. 379. A mix of different ethnic names, Hebrew, Greek and Latin, including some popular with the Herodian monarchy, namely Herodias, Berenice and Agrippa, have been found inscribed in a Jewish tomb complex (burial cave 5) at Jatt, situated inland from Caesarea, at the western edge of the Samaritan hill country (Porath, Yannai and

- Kasher 1999, 47–62, 168*–70*). This 1st century CE burial cave belonged originally to a wealthy Jewish family who, like the *prōtoi* of Tiberias, were evidently pro-Herodian.
- 286 Mason's suggestion that their *cognomina* or soubriquets (Miarus and Gamalus) may indicate that they belonged to priestly families is improbable, if only because their *nomen*, Herodes, is unparalleled among the known members of the priesthood; see Mason 2001, 40 nn. 200–201.
- 287 V 33. It is assumed that the valet of Agrippa II mentioned in V 382 is the same individual of that name. Crispus also acted as an emissary to the king on behalf of Justus of Tiberias (V 393). His title as given by Josephus in Greek is literally 'a certain one of those around his (i.e. the king's) bedchamber'; see Mason 2001, 154 n. 1562. This Crispus has been proposed as the ancestor (grandfather) of the Julia Crispina, daughter of Berenicianus, mentioned in the Babatha archive (Ilan 1992, 374, 380 [genealogical chart]).
- 288 V 177. For the meaning of '*Galilaiot*' in this context, see Mason 2001, 38 n. 186; Freyne 2000, 130–31; Jossa 1983.
- 289 Rajak 1973, 353.
- 290 For Justus and his account of the War, see Rajak 1973; Schürer 1973, 34–37.
- 291 The characteristics and underlying causes of this mutual antagonism between Jews and their gentile neighbours is analysed in Rappaport 2001. In the cities with mixed populations, while Roman governors usually tried to adopt a fairly balanced position between the communities, their military units responsible for maintaining law and order, who were recruited largely from the gentile population of the region, were strongly biased in favour of their pagan compatriots (*BJ* 2.268). Moreover, in rural areas, demographic growth tended to generate intense competition for land, exemplified by the clash between the Tyrian settlement of Qadesh (Naphtali) and the neighbouring Jewish communities of Upper Galilee (*BJ* 5.104–105; cf. Applebaum 1977, 384–85).
- 292 Mason 2016, 224–39. On hostility between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria: see Barclay 1996, 48–54, 72–75; Smallwood 1981, 233–42; 365–68; hostility in Antioch: Barclay 1996, 256–57; Smallwood 1981, 361–64.
- 293 On the history and remains of ancient Sepphoris, see Strange et al. 2015. It is believed that Herod Antipas was responsible for laying out the first regular street grid of the city. He has also been credited with a basilical building that has been uncovered at the foot of the hill and as the initiator of the stone theatre on the eastern slope. Due to considerable redevelopment of the city in the centuries that followed, very little architectural fabric predating the Judaeo-Roman War appears to remain in situ. The evidence obtained so far is summarised by Z. Weiss (Strange et al. 2015, 53–58). No traces of the royal palace established at Sepphoris by Herod the Great and mentioned by Josephus (*AJ* 17.271; cf. *BJ* 2.56) have yet been identified.
- 294 V 373–80. Josephus claims that he tried to limit the damage inflicted by vindictive elements which participated in his attack on Sepphoris.
- 295 *BJ* 2.511; cf. Mason 2008, 361 n. 3119.
- 296 *RPC* 1, nos. 4849–50; see Meshorer 1979, 159–63.
- 297 Jacobson 2012, 158.
- 298 Wilker 2012, 174.
- 299 Rajak 1973, 348.
- 300 *RPC* 1, nos. 4849–50 (pair of coins from Sepphoris); *RPC* 1, nos. 4988–90 with *RPC* 1.1, pp. 684–85 (three denominations of Agrippa II from Caesarea Philippi).

- 301 See Table A2.4 with RPC 1.1, p. 685.
- 302 *BJ* 3.443–61. At least one month must have elapsed since the fall of Jotapata, because Vespasian went from there directly to Caesarea Maritima to organise the legionary base and then spent 20 days with his men recuperating in Caesarea Philippi before moving on to Tiberias.
- 303 *SEG* 52.1693–94; cf. Kushnir-Stein 2002. See [Section A1.3](#).
- 304 On the names recorded on these two lead weights, see Sigismund 2007, 334–35.
- 305 The only difference evident from these lead weights is that, whereas there was a single *agoranomos* serving in Tiberias in the 30s CE (see p. 17 and n. 60), in the post-war period, the role seems to have been shared by two officials.
- 306 On the history and archaeology of this ancient town, if it is indeed identical to Magdala (al-Majdal), see De Luca and Lena 2015; Bauckham and De Luca 2015. Some of the fish-salting installations, for which Tarichaea was famous and had given it that name, have been brought to light there by the excavations (De Luca and Lena 2015, 280–83, 286–91, 308–11). It was a well-planned city with a fairly regular street plan. The inhabitants of Magdala/Tarichaea? enjoyed amenities of a regular Graeco-Roman city, including a bath-house and a *quadriporticus* next to it, that might also have served as a *palaestra*, and was initially constructed in the late Hellenistic period (*idem*, 319–25). It continued in use and was expanded in the mid-1st century CE and later. The other side of the *quadriporticus* was linked by a flight of stairs to the imposing stone quay, originally built in the mid-1st century BCE (*idem*, 325–26). It was long enough to accommodate the large number of small fishing boats mentioned by Josephus (*AJ* 2.635–37; *V* 163). Some of the stone mooring blocks were found *in situ*. At one end of the quay stood a massive tower, with casemate walls, which might possibly be the feature that gave the city its Aramaic name, Magdala. A synagogue dating from the 1st century CE (predating the Judaeo-Roman War) has also been found. Its distinctive features include frescoed walls and a decorated stone cuboid carved with a *menorah* and other possible references to the Temple in Jerusalem (De Luca and Lena 2015, 312–27). The purpose of this enigmatic object remains unclear. Neither the city walls nor the hippodrome of Tarichaea, mentioned by Josephus (*V* 138), have so far been identified.
- 307 *RIC* 2.12, p. 348 (sv. ‘Victoria Navalis / S C’). Although the Judaeo campaign was mostly conducted on dry land, the pursuit of the Jewish rebels fleeing from Tarichaea in boats on Lake Tiberias was counted by the Romans as a great naval success and was commemorated by the *Victoria Navalis* coin issues. Otherwise, how else might the presence of ‘a great number of ships’ (*BJ* 7.147) in the Flavian triumphal procession held in Rome in 71 CE be explained? See Mason 2016, 29–30; Kokkinos 2010, 9–11, 20.
- 308 For archaeological evidence of the Roman siege of Gamala (Tell al-Salām), see Syon 2014, 12–20; 2002, 136–53.
- 309 See Strange (2015, 391, 398–99) for an assessment of Gischala in relation to Josephus’ narrative and the Judaeo-Roman War. M. Aviam has uncovered portions of the earthworks that were constructed in preparation for the siege of that town; see Aviam 2004.
- 310 *BJ* 4.121–37. Josephus categorised these followers of John of Gischala from Galilee as Zealots (*BJ* 4.558). For Josephus’ use of this term and its application, see the discussion in Rajak 2002, 86–88.
- 311 *BJ* 4.141–46; cf. Price 1992, 45.
- 312 *BJ* 4.155–57; *AJ* 20.227; cf. Schürer 1979, 232 and n. 22.
- 313 In *BJ* 4.159, his name is erroneously transposed as Gorion son of Joseph.

- 314 *BJ* 4.236–85. In *AJ* 20.213, 223, this former High Priest and Sadducean elder is called Jesus son of Gamaliel, although in both the *Bellum* (*BJ* 160) and *Vita* (*V* 193, 204), he is referred to as Jesus son of Gamalas. In Rabbinic tradition, this Joshua son of Gam[a]la was betrothed to Martha of the High Priestly house of Boethus (*m. Yeb.* 6.4); see Schürer 1979, 232 and n. 20.
- 315 On Simon son of Gioras, who Josephus depicts as a ruthless tyrant with no redeeming features, see especially Mason 2016, 453–59; Fuks 1985/88; Goodman 1987, 202–206. Goodman regards Josephus’ vituperative attitude to Simon as being coloured by his political antagonism. Gerasa, as his place of origin, is mentioned at *BJ* 4.503, but Goodman, citing other detail from Josephus, follows G. Fuks in the view that this was not the great city of the Decapolis, but a humbler village of the same name in the hill country of northern Judaea (Goodman 1987, 203–204; cf. Fuks 1985/88, 11–13). However, Mason (2016, 458) explains that Gerasa of the Decapolis is quite plausible as Simon’s birthplace.
- 316 According to Crook (1951), Berenice and Titus were drawn together more by a shared political interest than romantic attraction. That author claimed that they were aligned against a faction led by Gaius Licinius Mucianus, Legate to Syria from 67 to 69 CE and influential in Vespasian’s rise to power (see p. 78 and n. 235). However, P. M. Rogers (1980) has exposed serious flaws in Crook’s argument and evidence.
- 317 *BJ* 4.552–55. For succinct reviews of archaeological findings at these sites with comprehensive references, see Netzer et al. 2013; Netzer 2008; Foerster and Netzer 1993 (Herodium); Netzer et al. 2008 and Netzer 1993 (Masada); Vörös 2019, 2015 and 2013 (Machaerus).
- 318 Although this Matthias was never High Priest himself, he was a member of the prestigious family of Boethus, which originated from Alexandria and furnished two High Priests (*AJ* 15.320). One of his ancestors, Simon son of Boethus, had been appointed High Priest by Herod the Great and was the father of one of Herod’s wives (the second Mariamme; *AJ* 15.320–22, 17.78, 18.109). Another ancestor, Simon Cantheras son of Boethus, had served as High Priest under Agrippa I (*AJ* 19.297, 313). On this distinguished family and its members, see Kokkinos 1998, 217–21.
- 319 *BJ* 5.5–12, 248–54. Tacitus (*Hist.* 5.12) confirms these details, but without giving numbers for each faction. It is possible that this Roman historian derived his information from Josephus’ *Bellum*.
- 320 For a succinct account of the events leading to the downfall of Nero, see Shotter 2008, 155–70. A more detailed analysis is provided by Griffin 1984, 185–207.
- 321 Idem, 91–92; Goodman 1987, 180. All the accounts that have come down to us of these provincial revolts are contained in Roman sources and presented from a Roman perspective; see Woolf 2011, 33–44.
- 322 Tac., *Hist.* 3.47; Kokkinos 1998, 382; Sullivan 1980b, 930.
- 323 Wilker 2011, 282–87; cf. S. Schwartz 1990, 132–42.
- 324 All four legions (the Vth Macedonica, Xth Fretensis, XVth Apollinaris and XIIth Fulminata) have literally left their mark on coins that circulated in the region, as countermarks with their respective insignias, possibly to impress their presence on the local population; see Hendin 2010, 461–70.
- 325 *BJ* 5.98–105. The Zealot leader Eleazar son of Simon is not mentioned hereafter and we must assume that he had been either killed in battle or at the hands of rivals.
- 326 *AJ* 19.326–27; *BJ* 2.218–22; 5.147–55; Dio 66.4.1–5.1. For recent archaeological evidence, see Avner and Arbiv 2016.

327 Price 1992, 292.

328 *BJ* 5.491–511. Roman siege works from the Judean-Roman War, including systems of circumvallation, reinforced with forts at intervals, largely survive at Machaerus (Vörös 2015, 229–34, 498–502; Strobel 1974 with plan on p. 174) and Masada (Arubas and Goldfus 2008; Richmond 1962 and fig. 5 on p. 145).

329 Den Hollander 2014, 264.

330 Josephus (*BJ* 5.550) mentions that, in normal times, there were 25 Attic drachms to the aureus, the standard gold coin of the age, which indicates that the Greek drachm was valued on a par with the Roman denarius. During the siege, the aureus had sunk in value to 12 drachms – that is, just under half its normal value, indicating that there was a relative surplus of gold in the besieged city, due to the melting down of gold vessels, jewellery and other objects, for bullion, mentioned in *BJ* 5.562. At the same time, we also know that there was an increasing shortage of silver in the besieged city, because by the fourth year of the War, half-shekels (as well as quarter and eighth shekels) were being struck mostly in bronze; see *TJC*, nos. 210–14, with very occasional half-shekel and quarter-shekel coins of silver being produced that year (*TJC*, nos. 209–210).

331 See also Philo, *Leg.* 157, 319.

332 *BJ* 6.23–32. A similar tactic was used by the rebels in the defence of Gamala, where a secondary wall, evidently hastily constructed of fieldstones, is observed against the inner face of the town wall where it was breached; see [Figures 7.2 and 7.3](#); cf. Syon 2002, 140 and fig. 9.2.

333 *BJ* 6.93–94. *b.Ta'an.* 4.6 gives the date of the cessation of Temple sacrifices more precisely as 17 Tammuz.

334 On Gophna, which stood on the site of modern village of Jifna, 8 km north of Ramallah, see *BJ* 3.55; Mason 2008, 385 n. 3403; Avi-Yonah 1976, 63. The name Gophna is undoubtedly related to the Hebrew word *gefen* ('vine'; cf. Euseb., *Onom.* 168.16). It was already a settlement of some size in the mid-1st century BCE (*BJ* 1.222; *AJ* 14.275). Gophna is mentioned in Talmudic literature under three variant names *b.Ber.* 44a (Gufnith); *y.Ta'an.* 4.5, 69a (Gufna); *t.Ohol.* 18.9 (Beth Gufnin). On the Madaba Map of roughly the same period the place is called Gophna (Avi-Yonah 1954, no. 46). From the Jerusalem Talmud (*y.Ta'an.* 4.5, 69a [3rd century CE]), we learn that it had become an abode of priestly families. On this site, see also Tsafir et al. 1994, 137.

335 A detailed description and evaluation of the massive retaining walls of the Temple enclosure, a large portion of which survive, is provided in Mazar et al. 2011, and the platform of the Temple Mount is examined in Gibson and Jacobson 1996.

336 *BJ* 6.5. The ramp at Masada, which is well preserved, shows it was constructed of branches and short pieces of wood, usually placed transversely to enable the fill, composed of stones and earth to hold the mass securely. There, timber culled from local trees (mostly tamarisk and date palm) was used; see Arubas and Goldfus 2008, 1939; Liphshitz et al. 1981.

337 Schwartz 2013, 136–39. The passage in Sulpicius Severus presents Titus' decision in the context of a Christian apologetic tract, with the Roman general deciding to destroy the Temple, in the hope that it would help eliminate both Judaism and Christianity, a sentiment that would have been unlikely in the missing work by Tacitus. On this text and Roman responsibility for the destruction of the Temple, see Barnes 2005; Rives 2005.

338 Goodman 2012, 188–89.

339 This date synchronises with that given by the Prophet Jeremiah when the First Temple was consumed by fire (Jer. 52.12–13), that is, the 10th day of the 5th

month, Ab. However, in Rabbinic tradition, the destruction of the two Temples is assigned to the 9th of Ab (*m.Ta'an.* 4.6).

- 340 The gates in question might possibly have been a predecessor of the Golden Gate in the east and the Double Gate, situated under the Aqsa Mosque in the south of the enclosure, the vestibule of which survives largely intact; see Mazar et al. 2011, 226–38 (Double Gate); idem, 162–70 (Golden Gate). However, because Josephus states that the two gates mentioned by him were later razed to the ground (*BJ* 6.281), it is more likely that they were gates belonging to the Inner Temple. Some sense of the scale of the destruction can be gauged from the heaps of fallen masonry that can be seen today at the foot of the western and southern perimeter walls of the Temple enclosure. Some of the massive ashlars have crashed with enormous force through the paving of the street that skirted the western wall.
- 341 The 'Burnt House', excavated in Area B of the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem (on the western edge of the Tyropoeon Valley) by N. Avigad and his team in the 1970s was most probably a casualty of this Roman clearance operation, although H. Geva does not exclude the possibility that the destruction of this mansion, which was occupied by members of the priestly Qatros family, occurred during infighting among the insurgents or earlier in the Roman siege of the city. At any rate, with its thick layer of ash, collapsed masonry, smashed pottery, abandoned weapons and human remains, it bears vivid testimony to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE; see Geva 2010, 28–71. Other vestiges of the devastation caused during the Roman conquest of the city that have been brought to light are highlighted in that report (*ibid.*, 69).
- 342 *BJ* 6.370–73. In excavations along the stepped street leading down from the Temple Mount to the Siloam Pool along the Tyropoeon Valley in the Lower City, which dates from the late Second Temple period, five breaks in the paving stones were found directly above a drainage tunnel, or sewer, that ran beneath this thoroughfare. Inside the channel the archaeologists found not only sherds of pottery but complete cooking pots from the same period (Reich 2011, 241–44). Such unbroken vessels indicate that their owners were subsisting in the tunnel and bear vivid testimony to Josephus' descriptions of the plight of the rebel fugitives.
- 343 *BJ* 6.387–91. Some of these items may be depicted in the 'booty relief' panel on the Arch of Titus (see n. 354). The precious fabrics were among the treasures carried in the triumphal procession in Rome held the following year (*BJ* 7.134).
- 344 *BJ* 7.29. The appearance of two of the rebel leaders, Menahem and Simon son of Gioras in the Temple in royal garb has led to speculation that they were expressing messianic ambitions. See Collins 2010, 222, in which the author briefly reviews this question.
- 345 Gambash 2015, 144–51. The creation of the new province of Judaea and staging of a grand triumph were undoubtedly calculated to legitimise and bolster the prestige of the new Flavian dynasty.
- 346 On the status of Judaea within the Roman Empire post 70 CE, see Eck 2017. A list of the known governors who served in Judaea for the period from Vespasian to Hadrian is given in Schürer 1973, 514–19.
- 347 *BJ* 7.163. Prior to his appointment as Roman Legate for the newly created province of Judaea, Bassus had been Prefect of the Roman fleet stationed at Ravenna (*Classis Ravennas*) and had defected from Vitellius to Vespasian in 69 CE. On Bassus and his career, see Eck 1999, 109–20, Dąbrowa 1993, 28–29.
- 348 *BJ* 7.123–57; Mason 2016, 21.
- 349 *BJ* 7.130–31; cf. Magness 2009, 36.
- 350 Norman 2009, 48 fig. 6.6a (plan of the route).
- 351 *BJ* 7.152; Dio 66.12.1a. Although Domitian had remained in Rome for the duration

of the Judaean-Roman War, he shared the glory of its successful outcome as a Flavian achievement; see Hendin 2010, 415–19.

352 *RIC* 2.12, Vesp. no. 1127.

353 The Arch of Titus was probably dedicated in 81 CE, the first year of the reign of Domitian, Titus' brother and successor (Pfanner 1983, 91–92). For a detailed analysis and photographs of the 'triumphator relief', see Pfanner 1983, 44–71 and tafs. 45–53.

354 For a detailed analysis and photographs of the 'booty relief', see Pfanner 1983, 71–76 and tafs. 54–67.

355 *BJ* 7.163. Evidence of occupation of the insurgents at Herodium during the War is provided by crudely built walls, mostly of spolia, in the Herodian palace on the summit and the large number of coins minted by the rebels, particularly of year four, that have been found at the site; see Foerster and Netzer 1993, 620–21; Ahipaz et al. 2017.

356 Silva enjoyed a distinguished senatorial and military career, becoming a Quaestor in 67/68 CE and Praetor in 73 CE. He served as Roman Legate for the province of Judaea from 73 CE to 79/80 CE, thereafter obtaining a consulship in 81 CE; see Eck 1970, 93–103. A monumental inscription mentioning him has come to light on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem; see Grüll 2006.

357 *BJ* 7.275–76; Davies 2011; Arubas and Goldfus 2008.

358 *BJ* 7.304–310; Davies and Magness 2017, 58–62.

359 On the date of the siege and conquest of Masada, which is disputed, see the discussion in Mason 2016, 561–65, with references, including Bowersock 1975, 183–84; Eck 1970, 93–111.

360 Mason 2016, 28–30.

361 Goodman 2007, 445–46.

362 Pucci Ben Zeev 2005; Schürer 1973, 529–34 (Diaspora Rebellion); Mor 2016; Horbury 2014 (Bar Kokhba Revolt).

363 *BJ* 7.409–19. As a precautionary measure, Vespasian ordered the Jewish temple at Leontopolis in the Nile Delta, which had been established in the days of the Maccabees, to be shut and demolished (*BJ* 7.420–36; cf. *AJ* 13.70). That temple had functioned for approaching two-and-a-half centuries; Josephus' figure of 343 years for the duration of its operation is erroneous.



8 Agrippa's activities in the aftermath of the War

Agrippa had remained by Titus' side through his campaign in Judaea and with his auxiliary troops at the siege of Jerusalem. There he would have been complicit in the destruction of the Judaeian capital and its illustrious Temple, which had been rebuilt in splendour by his great-grandfather Herod. He was present on while the city's remaining residents were either massacred or enslaved. When Titus and his soldiers were celebrating the conquest of Jerusalem in his capital and revelling in spectacles involving Jewish captives being devoured by wild beasts and engaging one another in mortal combat for entertainment, under duress, again Josephus remains tight-lipped about Agrippa's presence, so we have no means of gauging his reactions to the extreme cruelty and suffering that he was party to. Josephus is also studiously silent about burgeoning Berenice's relationship with Titus, probably out of deference to his special relationship with the Roman commander and desire not to offend or embarrass him.³⁶⁴

Agrippa did not immediately follow Titus to Rome, unlike Josephus, but Cassius Dio informs us that he arrived there with his sister in 75 CE, missing the triumphal procession and associated festivities in the Roman capital.³⁶⁵ They probably reached Rome in time to attend celebrations marking the completion of the Temple of Peace (*Templum Pacis*), that same year.³⁶⁶ This new forum-cum-temple complex housed the vessels and appurtenances of gold from the Jerusalem Temple (*BJ* 7.158–62). Neither in that complex nor in any of the other victory monuments erected by the Flavians to commemorate the Judaeian-Roman War did Agrippa feature, at least as far as we know.³⁶⁷ All the glory was reserved for Vespasian and Titus.

In addition to the famous surviving victory arch at the south-eastern edge of the Roman Forum, there was a second Arch of Titus that stood astride the main, southern entrance to the Circus Maximus until the early Middle Ages.³⁶⁸ It carried a dedicatory inscription that typifies the honour reserved exclusively for the Flavian father and eldest son, which translates as follows:

The Senate and the People of Rome to *Imperator* Titus Caesar Vespasian, son of the deified Vespasian, *Pontifex Maximus*, with tribunician power (*tribunicia potestas*) for the tenth time [81 CE], (declared) *Imperator* for the seventeenth time, Consul for the eighth time, Father of the Fatherland (*pater patriae*), their

princeps, because, on the instructions and advice of his father, and under his auspices, he subdued the Jewish people (*gentes iudaeorum*) and destroyed the city of Jerusalem, which all generals, kings, or peoples prior to him had assailed in vain or not attempted at all.³⁶⁹

The last sentence of this inscription represents a vain boast, disregarding the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and its conquests by Pompey in 63 BCE and Gaius Sosius, the governor of Syria, in 37 BCE when Herod gained the throne of Judaea (*BJ* 6.435–37). Those responsible for this inscription had clearly not consulted Josephus, or Agrippa II, for that matter!

The monumental arch at the Circus Maximus remained largely intact until about the 9th century CE. Now, only the foundations and stumps of four large columns on their plinths survive, together with several marble fragments. Judging from these remains, this arch had triple openings and was much larger than the single archway at the eastern end of the Roman Forum. Whereas the surviving Arch of Titus was more a monument to that recently deified emperor, the larger one fronting the Circus Maximus was a true triumphal arch specifically celebrating Titus' victory in Judaea. Triumphal processions of later emperors and generals celebrating their military victories would have passed beneath it.

After the arrival of Agrippa and Berenice in Rome in 75 CE, the passionate affair between Titus and Berenice re-ignited, as we learn from Roman sources (Tac., *Hist.* 2.1; Suet., *Titus* 7.1–2; Dio 66.15.3–4). Berenice moved into the Imperial palace with Titus (Dio 66.15.3–4). This Herodian queen, who had earlier committed to the precepts of Judaism, fulfilling a Nazirite vow in public view and only wedding non-Jewish partners who were circumcised, thought nothing of cohabiting out of wedlock with an uncircumcised gentile, albeit the heir to the Roman Empire.³⁷⁰ Berenice seems to have remained in Rome, living in style, anticipating her marriage to Titus, 'behaving in every respect as if she were his wife' and Roman empress (Dio 66.15.4; Suet., *Titus* 7.1). She even made her presence felt in the administration of Roman justice, having gained experience in the affairs of state in her brother's kingdom. Quintilian remarks that he once pleaded in a case on behalf of Berenice, where she sat in judgement.³⁷¹

The piteous image in the *Bellum* (*BJ* 2.313–14) of Berenice walking the streets of Jerusalem barefoot as a penitent in 66 CE and subjected to intimidation by the Roman governor, Gessius Florus, is indeed untypical. As we have seen, Berenice was more accustomed to a luxurious lifestyle and fine jewellery.³⁷² Her marriages to fabulously wealthy men like Marcus Julius Alexander, the son of the Alexandrian alabarch, Alexander, which, together with her own extensive landed

estates, made her enormously rich, as affirmed by Josephus.³⁷³ She is reported to have subsidised Vespasian in his bid for imperial office (Tac., *Hist.* 2.81).

In 79 CE, when Titus became emperor, the situation abruptly changed.³⁷⁴ Criticism of Titus' relationship with Berenice had been mounting in Rome. In one noteworthy incident, two Cynic philosophers who had previously been expelled from the imperial capital for castigating the autocratic conduct of the Flavian regime (Dio 66.13; Suet., *Vesp.* 13) managed to sneak back into the city. One of them, by the name of Diogenes, denounced Titus and his mistress in a long, abusive tirade, in front of a packed theatre audience, while the other, a certain Heras, followed him and 'gave vent to many senseless yelpings in true Cynic fashion' (Dio 66.15.5). Fierce disapproval of their relationship was shared by the Roman public, obliging Titus to bow to popular demand and forsake Berenice when he was about to succeed as emperor, although much against his own wish.³⁷⁵ While it was acceptable for a Roman official of equestrian rank, such as Felix, to marry a royal personage of a vanquished nation, it was deemed unacceptable for a senior senator and emperor presumptive to do so.³⁷⁶ The fact that Berenice was a foreign queen conjured up the spectre of a Queen Cleopatra *redeviva*,³⁷⁷ which undoubtedly contributed to her rejection by Roman society. Of course, it did not help Berenice's prospects that she was probably too old to provide an heir, being in her 40s when she arrived in Rome in 75 CE.³⁷⁸ Nonetheless, we are informed that she returned to Rome some time later (Dio 66.18.1).

For his part, after the War, Agrippa was awarded the *ornamenta praetoria*, raising him to the rank of a senior senator, in recognition of his contribution to the successful Flavian campaign in Judaea.³⁷⁹ At the same time, Agrippa's kingdom was augmented with some additional territory, according to Photius, citing the testimony of Justus of Tiberias.³⁸⁰ Kokkinos argues that because Arca (Arcea) is not mentioned as part of his kingdom at the start of the War (*BJ* 3.57), but is explicitly mentioned as being part of it afterwards (*BJ* 7.97), this territory in northern Lebanon was only awarded to him after 70 CE.³⁸¹ However, if the reading by Aliquot of a fragmentary inscription from Maad near Byblos is correct, Arca may have been in Agrippa's possession by 69/70 CE.³⁸²

Although Josephus tells us no more about Agrippa's movements, we may surmise that, after the War was over, he divided his time between his kingdom and Rome.³⁸³ We learn that there were several other members of the Herodian nobility living in Rome after the War, who are mentioned as purchasers of copies of the *Bellum* from Josephus (*Ap.* 1.51). One of those named is the Herodian nobleman, Julius

Archelaus son of Alexas Helcias (see n. 78). Julius Archelaus was married to Mariamme, a sister of Agrippa II (AJ 19.355; 20.140). From his *praenomen*, Julius, we learn that he possessed Roman citizenship. Julius Archelaus, like Agrippa II, was well integrated into Graeco-Roman society; Josephus says that he, like his contemporaries among the Herodian élite, was ‘well-versed in Greek learning’ (Ap. 1.51). Josephus informs us that his another customer was ‘the most distinguished Herod’, who cannot now be definitely identified.³⁸⁴

Scholars have pondered over the decision by Vespasian not to appoint Agrippa II as a client king of Judaea, following the conclusion of the War. After all, Agrippa enjoyed exceptionally close links with the Flavian regime. As we have seen, Claudius had toyed with this possibility a quarter of a century earlier in 44 CE, after the death of Agrippa I (AJ 19.362). That it did not happen after the War may have been influenced by Agrippa’s preferences, such as not wanting to take over a territory in ruins and wishing to advance his political career in Rome, where his sister was making waves at court.³⁸⁵ However, the clinching consideration in Vespasian’s decision may well have been Agrippa’s inability to preserve order within the borders of his own kingdom, highlighted by his failure to bring the small town of Gamala back under his control.³⁸⁶ Moreover, his undoubted complicity in the brutal excesses perpetrated against Jewish captives taken in the War would have made it impossible for Agrippa to expect any cooperation from a large segment of the Judaeian population. There may have been other contributory factors as well for that decision.³⁸⁷ One may have been the king’s advanced age, by the norms of that period (he was then in his late 40s) and lack of a ready heir to succeed him. D. R. Schwartz has also suggested that Judaea may no longer have been considered a territory justifying a monarch; in any case, Agrippa had turned his back on the Jewish nation and its religion. His sibling relationship to the discarded mistress of Titus also did not help his chances after 79 CE.

Mindful that the recent bloody events could be repeated in Judaea, as indeed happened during Hadrian’s reign just over half a century later, Vespasian deemed it to be safer for Rome to place Judaea under firm direct rule with a strong legionary presence, and this is the course that he followed. Vespasian’s experience in Judaea must have convinced him that giving far-flung territories within the Roman Empire limited local autonomy under dynasts of questionable competence and loyalty was a risky option. Not only did he refrain from putting Judaea under Agrippa’s authority, but he proceeded to abolish several remaining client kingdoms close to the volatile Parthian frontier and placed them under direct rule from Rome: Armenia Minor in 71/72 CE, Commagene in 72/73 CE, and also

Emesa, by 78 CE.³⁸⁸ Agrippa's own client kingdom was extinguished by the end of the 1st century CE (see below).

During his stay in Rome through the late 70s CE, Agrippa came into close contact with Josephus and is said to have written him 62 letters (V 362–67; Ap. 1.51–52), which Josephus relates with considerable pride. Two of these, in which he praises the historian's account of the Judean-Roman War (the *Bellum*), are quoted by the historian:

King Agrippa to dearest Josephus, greeting. I have perused the books with the greatest pleasure. You seem to me to have written with much greater care and accuracy than any who have dealt with the subject. Send me the remaining volumes [of the *Bellum Judaicum*].

(V 365)

King Agrippa to dearest Josephus, greeting. From what you have written you appear to stand in no need of instruction, to enable us all to learn (everything from you) from the beginning. But when you meet me, I will myself by word of mouth inform you of much that is not generally known.

(V 366)

We are given to understand that, afterwards, Josephus sold a copy of the entire work to 'the most admirable King Agrippa' (V 362; Ap. 1.51). The historian valued the good opinion of him held by the king by naming his youngest son Agrippa/Simonides, who was born in 77/78 CE.³⁸⁹

There are several issues raised by these letters. Although we should not doubt that Josephus was in frequent communication with Agrippa and that the king provided him with valuable input for the *Bellum*, as usual with documents reproduced by ancient authors, their genuineness has to be queried. For example, the 'high concentration of characteristic Josephan language, especially from this section of the *Life (Vita)*' has been noted in the first of these missives from Agrippa II.³⁹⁰ On the other hand, the second letter has been noted for its vulgar and idiosyncratic Greek, pointing to the king's limited competence in that language and perhaps indicative of the letter's authenticity.³⁹¹ While Agrippa had reason to be satisfied by his portrayal in the *Bellum*, it is not self-evident that the king was qualified to judge the veracity of all the events described by Josephus. In particular, during the Roman campaign in Galilee, both Agrippa and his erstwhile aide, Justus of Tiberias, were residing in Berytus, well away from the fighting (V 357). Although Agrippa was not an eyewitness of many of the events described, unlike Josephus (BJ 1.3), the king could have been apprised of the events 'by inquiry from those who knew them' (Ap. 1.53) and would have been permitted ready access to the Commentaries (*hypomnēmata*) of Vespasian and Titus (V 342, 358, Ap. 1.56).

The literary sources fall silent about Agrippa after Josephus describes the king's correspondence with him in Rome, although, paradoxically, most of the coinage issued in his name and epigraphical material referring to the king date to the later years of his reign. In the 90s CE, when Josephus was in the process of putting his final touches to the *Antiquitates Judaicarum*, its autobiographical addendum (the *Vita*) and his apologetic composition, the *Contra Apionem*, Agrippa is not mentioned in connection with their publication, indicative that he was outside the frame of the author's circle in Rome during those years.³⁹² Perhaps by then, the king was either already dead (see below) or back in his kingdom.

It appears that Agrippa left no children and his sexual orientation is not known. There is no satisfactory evidence that he ever married or kept a regular mistress.³⁹³ Josephus mentions just one man with whom he says Agrippa enjoyed a 'faithful friendship', Philip son of Jacimus, the commander-in-chief of his army, who was distinguished by his physique, as one might expect of a cavalry officer and mounted archer (*AJ* 17.30–31). We do not know whether Agrippa indulged in pederasty, a socially acceptable practice in classical antiquity (although not among Jews). If he was a pederast, it is unlikely to have attracted scrutiny from Roman writers, although such a preference might have attracted criticism from Jewish circles, but no such accusation was levelled against Agrippa by Josephus or the rabbis. Yet, Agrippa stands in stark contrast to his more famous great-grandfather, Herod the Great, who was an alpha male, contracting ten marriages and fathering 15 known offspring.³⁹⁴

The only woman with whom Agrippa was closely associated was his sister, Berenice. He cohabited with her over an extended period, which encouraged rumours that they indulged in an incestuous relationship. It is interesting to note that Berenice's companionship with her brother lasted for almost two decades from 48 CE, when her second husband Herod of Chalcis died, with an interlude in 63/64 CE during her brief marriage to Polemo II. While brother-sister pairing was quite normal among royalty in Pharaonic and Ptolemaic Egypt, the Nabataean kingdom and also among the contemporaneous client monarchies in the Near East, including Commagene, this practice was frowned upon in Rome.³⁹⁵ The incestuous relationship that Caligula indulged in with his three sisters, especially the younger Drusilla, scandalised Rome.

There is evidence to show that the close relationship between Agrippa and Berenice operated on a higher political level than mere companionship. Josephus informs us that Berenice fulfilled the role of a royal consort, *de facto*; thus, we are informed that she and Agrippa jointly appointed an administrator of the kingdom (*V* 49) and a

certain Ptolemy served as an *epitropos* (steward) to both of them (*BJ* 2.595). In other words, in practice they operated together as co-rulers and, in Agrippa's absence, Berenice took responsibility for making important political decisions, for example, openly committing their joint support for Vespasian's bid for the imperial throne (*Tac., Hist.* 2.81). They also shared ceremonial duties, illustrated by their joint visit to Caesarea Maritima in 60 CE, to welcome the new governor of Judaea, Porcius Festus (*Acts* 25.13). Their association in affairs of state is confirmed in honorific inscriptions, one at Qalaat Faqrā (in ancient Arca) 'for the salvation of lord King Marcus Julius Agrippa and lady Queen Berenice', and the second, already mentioned, on the architrave of a monumental building at Berytus (Beirut) naming King Agrippa I, Queen Berenice, and probably Agrippa II, as benefactors.³⁹⁶

With the large majority of his kingdom inhabited by non-Jewish communities and the abrupt termination of his involvement in the affairs of Jerusalem and its Temple, following their destruction, Agrippa had little reason to pay much attention to Jewish matters thereafter and he evidently did not. Rather, Agrippa II redoubled his efforts to justify his position as Rome's faithful representative and agent for cultural assimilation.³⁹⁷ From his post-war coinage, we can observe a deliberate strengthening of ties with the centre of the Empire, with Latin appearing on several issues struck after the War and efforts to integrate his coinage into the Roman currency system (see [Sections A2.3](#) and [A2.4](#)).

[Figure 8.1](#) Remnant of natural woodland on the Golan (Gaulanitis).

The literary sources provide a glimpse of Agrippa II as a wealthy landowner. Albeit his kingdom was somewhat fragmented geographically, Agrippa ruled over some of the most agriculturally productive areas in the Levant. These included the relatively well-watered lands of Peraea, the shores of Lake Tiberias and the Golan (Gaulanitis) plateau ([Figure 8.1](#)). He also acquired possession of the lush tract around Arca in the Lebanon, quite close to the Mediterranean shore.³⁹⁸ While we have no quantitative information about Agrippa's personal wealth, its size can be approximately estimated from the data given by Josephus for his predecessors who had title to much of the same territory. Josephus states that Herod Antipas enjoyed an annual revenue of 200 talents from Peraea and Galilee, while the areas to the east of Galilee, namely Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis and 'a certain portion of what was called the domain of Zenodorus' yielded Philip the Tetrarch the sum of 100 talents (*AJ* 17.319; *BJ* 2.95). Although Agrippa II only possessed the eastern portion of Galilee, he certainly made up for the lack of

western Galilee with Arca and Abilene. So, it seems reasonable to estimate the annual revenue from his territories as exceeding 300 talents (of silver) and may have been nearer 1,000 talents.³⁹⁹ With one Attic talent equivalent to 6,000 drachmas, his revenue from those sources would have approached six million drachmas. One drachma represents the average day wage of a labourer in the Graeco-Roman economy.⁴⁰⁰ Besides this revenue, Agrippa would have derived supplementary income from the vast estates that he owned outright. As an example, together with his sister, Berenice, the king possessed estates near Mount Tabor administrated by his steward (*epitropos*), Ptolemy, and elsewhere by Thaumastus, who their father Agrippa I received as a slave from Caligula (*BJ* 2.595; *V* 126–27; *AJ* 18.194). If the ‘King Agrippas’ mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud is Agrippa II, he had another *epitropos* based in Tiberias and owned an estate at Sepphoris.⁴⁰¹ Royal property outside Agrippa II’s kingdom is known also in the vicinity of Besara (Beth She’arim), where corn was collected from the local villages (*V* 119). This would have been part of the extensive royal domain in the Plain of Esdraelon (Jezreel Valley), which had much earlier been Hasmonean property and appropriated by Herod the Great (*AJ* 14.207). Additional revenue was also obtained directly and indirectly from trade and commerce, through excise duties, tolls and sales taxes.⁴⁰²

One needs to remember that the local economy was almost entirely agrarian, with society comprising a small élite of prosperous land owners and merchants at the apex of a sharply narrowing pyramid. Below them were craftsmen in various occupations, while the great mass of the population eked out a living as subsistence farmers, fishermen and in various other menial activities, much as described in the Gospels. Archaeological excavations of small towns and villages, such as Gamala (Tell al-Salām),⁴⁰³ Magdala/Tarichaea? (al-Majdal),⁴⁰⁴ Cana (Khirbet Qana),⁴⁰⁵ and Jotapata,⁴⁰⁶ which can be firmly dated to the late Second Temple period, have largely confirmed this picture. It shows that most of the population, while not grindingly poor, lived in rather primitive conditions, enjoying very few luxuries, either local or imported.⁴⁰⁷

Due to the dearth of information in Josephus about Agrippa’s activities in his kingdom after the War, we have to rely more heavily on the evidence provided by surviving inscriptions and the corpus of Agrippa’s coins. One inscription (*IGLS* 5.2707) gives us a brief glimpse of Agrippa’s ongoing control of the operation of religious sanctuaries in his realm. It has come to light at Yabrūd (ancient Iabruda), north of Damascus and at the northern extremity of Abilene.⁴⁰⁸ This inscription records an abuse of the local High Priesthood by one Samsigeramus, probably Emesan in origin, which was harshly dealt with by Agrippa.

He ordered the immediate seizure of the assets which had been expropriated by that individual from local citizens and their restoration to the rightful owners. The superintendent (*epimelētēs*) at Halbūn (Helbon) in Abilene who regulated some benefaction made to a local cult may have been appointed in a supervisory capacity by Agrippa (*SEG* 7.217; see Section A.1.4.2b).

The corpus of epigraphical material also shows that there was continuity in other aspects of Agrippa's authority. The policy of planting and sustaining military colonies in the basalt uplands of Batanaea, Trachonitis and also Auranitis to maintain order and suppress banditry was continued for the duration of his reign. From inscriptions, M. Sartre has postulated that these territories were organised into districts with chief villages (referred to as *mētrokōmiai*).⁴⁰⁹ As Graf has pointed out in this volume (Section A1.7), the evidence regarding the origin, distribution and function of these *mētrokōmiai* is far from clear. The building inscriptions, as we would expect from the coins, confirm that the principal eras employed in Agrippa's domains were two, spaced five years apart (see Section A2.1), whereas those of the semi-autonomous or Roman-governed cities in the region continued to employ either the Seleucid era or local ones until late antiquity. After Agrippa's rule came to an end, his domains fell under direct imperial control and switched from his eras to dating by regnal years of the current Roman emperor.

An inscription from Şur al-Lejā, (ancient Saura, Trachonitis) dated to the 20th year of Agrippa II (either 79/80 or 74/75 CE) honours Herod son of Aumos, *stratēgos* and *stratopedarchēs* to Agrippa.⁴¹⁰ This successor to Philip son of Jacimus seems to have been of Arab rather than Jewish lineage, judging from his father's name. Another officer, who served Agrippa II after the War as a commander of cavalry (decurion) with an Arab-sounding name was the cavalry officer, Ausos son of Aios, interred at Saura 'in the 28th year of Agrippa' (87/88 or 82/83 CE).⁴¹¹ Besides colonists of Jewish and Arab heritage, another inscription mentions 'the Greeks residing at Danaba' in Trachonitis, although we have no certainty about its date.⁴¹² From a note in Josephus' *Vita* (112–13), we learn that, even before the outbreak of the Judaeo-Roman War, members of the local 'nobility' dwelling in Trachonitis were uncircumcised gentiles.

Other than in matters of financial control and the planting of military settlements, Herodian rule made little impact on the way of life in the territories that formed part of his kingdom. The building remains show that the ancestral polytheistic cults continued with no major change.⁴¹³ The chief deity, Baalshamin, was assimilated to Zeus Kyrios and there were other manifestations of growing Graeco-Roman influences, including the dominance of Greek in inscriptions.

Decorative motifs that were popular in Herodian Judaea, but which themselves derive from the Hellenistic repertoire, appear in local sanctuaries, exemplified by the temple of Baalshamin at Si' (Seeia).⁴¹⁴

That Agrippa remained active in his kingdom after the War is highlighted by at least one Safaitic inscription (OCIANA 0029371), dated to one of his eras, which definitely refers to the second king of that name. Safaitic is an ancient North Arabian dialect with its own unique alphabet, which was used by the Arab nomads of the basalt desert straddling southern Syria and northern Jordan. This dated rock inscription, and perhaps others, too, which mention 'King Agrippa' demonstrate that Agrippa's rule was continuing to have an impact even on the itinerant population beyond the edge of his kingdom after the Judaeo-Roman War. Safaitic inscriptions mentioning 'King Agrippa' are discussed in [Section A1.8](#).

As indicated earlier, coins continued to be struck for Agrippa II, presumably at a mint in his royal capital, Caesarea Philippi (Paneas). Although these coins are dated, only a single era is employed, which creates some uncertainty about which of the king's two principal eras, 55/56 or 60/61 CE, is meant. There are two coin issues where we can be certain that the dating refers to the era of 60/61 CE.⁴¹⁵ These coins carry the year dates 25 and 26, respectively, of an era of Agrippa and closely replicate a pair of Roman issues of 84 CE in their motifs and Latin inscriptions,⁴¹⁶ apart from the additions 'in the time of King Agrippa, year 25' and ditto, but with 'year 26' on their reverses (see [Section A2.3](#), p. 185–86). They must, therefore, have a *terminus postquem* of 84 CE, a condition which is satisfied for an era of Agrippa beginning in 60/61 CE, so that years 25 and 26 correspond to 84/85 and 85/86 CE, respectively.

One of Agrippa II's coin types features the bust of a veiled female, captioned *Sebastē* ('Augusta') on its obverse and an anchor with the date 'year 19 [of] King Agrippa' on its reverse.⁴¹⁷ Various ideas have been floated about the intended identity of this female figure. One suggestion that has been put forward, based on an era of 61 CE, which would make the year of issue 79/80 CE, when Titus succeeded his father Vespasian as Roman Emperor and Berenice might have expected to be made Empress.⁴¹⁸ In that case, the image in question might be identified as Berenice. This is, of course, highly conjectural. Other, more plausible candidates for the female depicted on the coin are Livia, who is usually shown in posthumous representations as veiled in the guise of *Pietas*, as on a dupondius issued under Tiberius and 'restored' on dupondii of Titus, or alternatively Julia, the daughter of the new emperor, Titus.⁴¹⁹

The last attested evidence for Agrippa II being alive is provided by the coins dated to 'year 35' which, based on his era of 60/61,

corresponds to 94/95 CE⁴²⁰; see [Figure 8.2](#). Further numismatic evidence that a change of guard was afoot is provided by a resumption of local coinage struck at Canatha (Qanawāt) in Auranitis, after a lapse of 45 years, and which does not acknowledge Agrippa. Tellingly, these coins are dated to year 157 of the Pompeian or city era beginning in the autumn of 62 BCE, corresponding to 94/95 CE; see [Figure 8.3](#).⁴²¹ The inscriptions paint a consistent picture. The last dated inscription mentioning Agrippa II is one from al-Sanamayn (Roman Aire or Aire), inscribed ‘year 37 which is also year 32 of King Agrippa’, that is, 91/92 CE (*IGLS* 14.559) and after that there is an epitaph from the vicinity of al-Suweidā’ (Suada/Dionysias in Auranitis; *IGLS* 16.1447), which bears the date ‘year 16 of Domitian Caesar’, that is, 95/96 CE.⁴²² On the same score, Josephus made a note in his *Antiquitates* (*AJ* 17.28) to the effect that he was aware that Batanaea had returned to Roman administration by the time he had completed revising that work.⁴²³ All this evidence points to Agrippa’s death in 94/95 CE. Millar had placed Agrippa’s death in 92/93 CE, before that scholar was able to avail himself of the subsequent resolution of that king’s eras.⁴²⁴

[Figure 8.2](#) Agrippa II. AE 27mm, 14.77 g. Laureate head of Domitian; ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑ ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑ ΚΑΙCΑΡΑ ΓΕΡΜΑΝΙ (‘Emperor Domitian Caesar Germanicus’) / Tyche wearing a *kalathos*, standing and holding two corn-ears and cornucopia; ΕΤΟΥ ΕΛ Β[Α] ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙ[Α] (‘Year 35 of King Agrippa’) *RPC* 2, no. 2296 = *TJC*, no. 159 Heritage Signature Auction 3003 (8–9 Mar. 2012), lot 20170. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, Inc.

Year 35 = 94/95 CE, based on Agrippa’s era of 60/61 CE, was the last year coins were issued in the name of the king.

[Figure 8.3](#) Canatha, Auranitis. Æ16 mm, 2.92 g. Laureate head of Domitian; [ΚΑΙCΑΡ] ΔΟΜΙΤΙ (‘Caesar Domitian’) / Bust of Tyche with mural crown; ΚΑΝΑΤΑ ΖΝΡ (= City year 157 = 94/95 CE). *RPC* 2, no. 2092. Private collection, with permission.

Canatha resumed striking its own coins in 94/95 CE, after a break of 45 years, shortly after the city regained its municipal autonomy, i.e., on the death of Agrippa II.

On the other hand, the 9th-century CE Patriarch of Constantinople and scholar, Photius, reputedly on the authority of Justus of Tiberias, placed Agrippa’s passing in the third year of the emperor Trajan (100

CE).⁴²⁵ That date is congruent with an inscription from the Haurān (Auranitis) mentioning one 'Archieus who served King Agrippa as a centurion for eighteen years, and Trajan as a *stratēgos* for ten' (IGLS 16.1475). It can be interpreted that Archieus' military career spanned 28 years continuously, implying that Agrippa lived on until at least the commencement of Trajan's reign in 98 CE.⁴²⁶ Photius' date, however, is seemingly at odds with the chronology of Josephus' *Vita*. Josephus is fairly clear about Agrippa being dead by the time the *Vita* was 'published'.⁴²⁷ The *Vita* constituted an addendum to the *Antiquitates*, which, as we have noted above, was completed in 93/94 CE.⁴²⁸ Nevertheless, Kokkinos has put up a robust defence of Photius' 100 CE date for Agrippa's demise, answering the arguments put forward by Millar with his co-revisers of Schürer and Rajak against it.⁴²⁹ In turn, Haensch has questioned the continuity of the career of the centurion Archieus from Agrippa's command to that of Trajan, arguing for a gap in that soldier's service.⁴³⁰ However, he is unable to explain convincingly why his intervening activity is not mentioned on the epitaph and what it might have been.

It is likely, then, that Agrippa II passed away in 94/95 CE, aged in his late 60s, while keeping open the possibility that he died in 100 CE, five years or so after relinquishing his kingdom.⁴³¹ The place and circumstances of his death remain unknown. These details are only of significance in clarifying the manner in which Agrippa's kingdom was brought to an end. Agrippa II's death by 94/95 CE would be consistent with his entire kingdom expiring at once, whereas a date for his demise of 100 CE would make it necessary to postulate that his kingdom was incorporated into the province of Syria in stages, the easternmost regions between c. 92 and 96 CE, with the rest, including Gaulanitis (with Ulatha and Paneas), eastern Galilee and southern Peraea, at his death.⁴³² It may be relevant to this question that in c. 93 CE Agrippa's cousin, Aristobulus son of Herod of Chalcis, and cousin once removed, Alexander son of Tigranes VI, had ceased to rule, although in the case of the latter, at least, his career continued.⁴³³

Agrippa II's passing went largely unnoticed by contemporary writers, with Justus possibly being an exception, and we don't even know if he was laid to rest in his kingdom or in Rome.⁴³⁴ Neither do we have any knowledge about when and where Agrippa's sisters died, including Berenice, who was closest to him. Like their brother, these siblings just fade into the mist of history. As far as the Herodian dynasty is concerned, Agrippa represents the last of its members to rule in the southern Levant. On the other hand, individuals with Herodian pedigrees continued to flourish. Kokkinos has identified descendants of Herod the Great, who had largely assimilated into the

Roman élite, down to the mid-2nd century and the reign of Antoninus Pius.⁴³⁵

The Flavian practice of closing down client kingdoms, including that left by Agrippa II, raises the fundamental question as to whether the client network was merely intended to be an interim administrative arrangement during the Imperial period and early Principate when Rome's dominions were growing rapidly and the imperial rulers needed that supplementary support to help govern their vast and expanding territories. It follows from such a viewpoint that the client kings and dynasts could be dispensed with when the Empire approached a stable size with consolidated borders. Of course, this doesn't necessarily mean to say that when the client system was first established, Roman leaders foresaw this arrangement only as a transient step to full incorporation.⁴³⁶ Among the lessons learnt by the Roman ruling authority from the Judaeo-Roman War would have been that subject peoples did not trust client kings and dynasts appointed by Rome, who they did not consider as one of their own but as agents of the emperor and not much different from Roman governors of Imperial or Senatorial provinces. Emperors seem to have realised that devolving authority to client rulers like Agrippa II was fraught with risk while offering hardly any advantages over operating a uniform policy of direct rule throughout the Empire.

³⁶⁴ Ilan 1999, 93.

³⁶⁵ Dio 66.15.3. One can only speculate about Agrippa's delayed arrival in Rome. Either Vespasian or Agrippa may have taken the decision to wait for the conclusion of the War with the fall of Masada in 73/74 CE or his arrival might have been timed to coincide with the dedication of the *Templum Pacis*. For an assessment of these and other possible reasons for the delay, see Den Hollander 2014, 265–66.

³⁶⁶ Dio 66.15.1. On Vespasian's *Templum Pacis* complex, see De Angeli 1999, 124–25 and figs. 69–71; Gallia 2016, 152–53; Magness 2009, 37–38; Millar 2005, 109–11. Gallia (2016, 153) points out that the *Templum Pacis* was established as a triumphal monument like the earlier Imperial fora. Its dedication as a monument to peace is not inconsistent with this fact because the Roman notion of *pax* was a peace brought about through the subjugation of enemies. In this case, it also signified peace restored in Rome after the upheavals during the 'Year of the Four Emperors'.

³⁶⁷ On the Flavian victory monuments in Rome, see Magness 2009; Millar 2005. The most imposing monument built with the spoils of the Judaeo-Roman War was, of course, the Colosseum; see Gallia 2016, 154–55; Magness 2009, 37; Millar 2005, 113–19.

³⁶⁸ Cianco Rossetto 1993, 108–109 and figs. 157 and 274. Like its better-known counterpart, it is very likely to have been built in the first year of Domitian's reign.

³⁶⁹ *CIL* 6.944 = *ILS* 264. Translation after Dudley 1967, 212 and Millar 2005, 120; cf. Holloway 1987, 190–91. This inscription was recorded by a 9th-century monk in a manuscript preserved in the Einsiedeln Abbey Library, Switzerland (codex 326 [1076], 71v).

- 370 The contrasting depictions of Berenice as a pious Jewess in *BJ* 2.310–14 and licentious sinner in *AJ* 20.145–46 are examined by Krieger (1997). He explains that these contradicting sides to her behaviour were given prominence in these two works because they were written for two different target audiences, but fails to demonstrate that either of these characterisations was false.
- 371 Quint., *Inst. Orat.* 4.1.19; cf. Young-Widmaier 2002.
- 372 Juvenal (*Sat.* 6.156–57) waxes lyrical about a fabulous diamond which Agrippa II gave Berenice to wear.
- 373 *BJ* 2.595; *AJ* 20.146; *V* 119; cf. Jones 1984, 61 and 75 n. 105.
- 374 Braund 1984b; Kokkinos 1998, 329–30; Goodman 2012, 183–84.
- 375 Suet., *Titus* 7.2; Dio 66.15.4; cf. Keaveney and Madden 2003; Rogers 1980, 94–95. Popular antipathy towards Berenice in Rome seems to have run so deep that a rumour that she was behind the decision by Titus to execute the ex-Consul Caecina Alienus was still doing the rounds in the 4th century CE (Aur. Vict., *Caes.* 10.4).
- 376 Goodman 1987, 49.
- 377 Wilker 2016.
- 378 Goodman 2012, 185. Of course, Titus himself may not have had serious designs to make Berenice his empress; see Anagnostou-Laoutides and Charles 2015.
- 379 Dio 66.15.4; cf. Wilker 2011, 282.
- 380 Phot., *Bibl.* 33. It was usual for the award of *ornamenta* to a client king to be accompanied by the grant of territory, and this must have also applied to Agrippa II (S. Schwartz 1990, 116). Agrippa's possession of Arca is attested by the honorific inscription to the king and his sister in the small temple at Qalaat Faqrā on Mount Lebanon, situated between Berytus and Heliopolis (Baalbek) and lying within that territory; see [Section A1.1.4](#), pp. 147–48; also Rey-Coquais 1999, 638–40, no. 6; Kropp 2013b, 332–33; Aliquot 2009, 263–65.
- 381 Kokkinos 1998, 329.
- 382 *SEG* 46.1781 with Aliquot 2009, 135 and n. 53.
- 383 Having spent most of his early years in Rome, the Imperial capital would have been very much a second home to him. He would have joined a sizeable and varied expatriate élite settled there, a policy encouraged by the Flavian Emperors (Bowersock 2005).
- 384 See Barclay 2007, 37 n. 210.
- 385 Goodman 2007, 458–59.
- 386 Levick 2017, 31.
- 387 D. R. Schwartz 2005, 66–78.
- 388 Aristobulus, the son of Herod of Chalcis and first cousin of Agrippa II was appointed by Nero in 54 CE to rule Armenia Minor (*AJ* 20.158). Aristobulus issued bronze coins there in 61/62 CE (year 8 of his reign; see *RPC* 1, nos. 3839–40). These bear his portrait. On one of them, his wife Salome is shown as well. In 70/71 CE (year 17 of his reign; see *RPC* 2, no. 1692) he struck another coin bearing his portrait. On the basis of the numismatic evidence, the era of Nicopolis-ad-Lycum, the chief city of Armenia Minor, is reckoned to have begun in 71/72 CE, which was the year that territory was annexed to Rome by Vespasian; see Leschhorn 1993, 144–49; *RPC* 1.1, p. 570; 2.1, p. 246; Kokkinos 1998, 312 and n. 163. On the extinction of the kingdom of Commagene, see *BJ* 7.219–43; Suet., *Vesp.* 8.3; cf. Bowersock 1973, 135; Millar 1993, 81–83. The incorporation of Emesa under direct Roman rule is briefly dealt with in Bowersock 1973 and Millar 1993, 84.
- 389 Kokkinos 1998, 109 n. 83. We are informed that Agrippa/Simonides was born to Josephus and his Cretan-Jewish second wife during the ninth year of the reign of

- Vespasian, that is, 76/77 CE (V 427), precisely the time that Josephus was working on the *Bellum* and corresponding with Agrippa. His surviving son from his first marriage, Hyrcanus (born in 72/73 CE), may have been named after Julius Hyrcanus, the son of Queen Berenice and Herod of Chalcis (*BJ* 2.221; *AJ* 20.104), which might suggest that Josephus was also attempting to cultivate the patronage of Agrippa's sister (S. Schwartz 1990, 11 and n. 31).
- 390 Mason 2001, 150 n. 1501.
- 391 Thackeray 1926, 135 n. a; cf. Mason 2001, 150 n. 1503 (use of a word not otherwise found in Josephus).
- 392 For this period of Josephus' literary activity, see Mason 2003b.
- 393 The suggestion that Agrippa II had two wives, conjectured by Derenbourg (1867, 252–54) from the Talmudic passage mentioning 'King Agrippas', is hardly credible.
- 394 Kokkinos 1998, 206–45.
- 395 For royal sibling couples in Nabataea, see Barkay 2015/16; in Commagene, see Goodman 2012, 184–85.
- 396 See n. 380 with [Section A1.1.4](#) (the inscription at Qalaat Faqrā); pp. 26–27 and n. 92 with [Section A1.1.2](#) (the Berytus inscription).
- 397 Dąbrowa 2015, 207–208.
- 398 On Arca (Arcea), see Schürer 1973, 478 n. 37; Starcky 1971/72.
- 399 See Kokkinos 1998, 337. In his long speech to the population of Jerusalem, as recorded by Josephus (*BJ* 2.386), Agrippa II told his audience that Judaea yielded a 12th of the tribute that Egypt yielded to Rome. Strabo (17.1.13 [798]) mentions that, in the mid-1st century BCE, Ptolemy XII Auletes received an annual tribute of 12,500 talents from Egypt, which is broadly consistent with Josephus' statement that Herod's heirs – Herod Archelaus, Herod Antipas and Philip – received territories that yielded a total yearly tribute of 900 talents (*AJ* 17.318–20); see Applebaum 1977, 375–76).
- 400 Tobias' travelling companion received a daily payment of one drachm plus expenses (Tob. 5.14). The same daily wage was paid by the Athenian state to mariners in the 5th century BCE (Thuc. 6.31.3). The day wage for agricultural labourers in Galilee was one denarius, according to the New Testament (Matt. 20.2, 9, 13), the value of a denarius being equivalent to the drachm at the beginning of the Christian era (see n. 330).
- 401 *b.Sukk.* 27a; cf. Miller 1984, 37–40.
- 402 *AJ* 17.205; Gabba 1990, 162; Applebaum 1976, 665.
- 403 Syon and Yavor 2008; Syon 2002.
- 404 De Luca and Lena 2015.
- 405 McCollough 2015.
- 406 Aviam 2015.
- 407 Despite the fairly consistent evidence supplied by archaeological investigations, scholars differ widely in their interpretation of the economic conditions that prevailed in the region during the late Second Temple period; see, for example, the debate between Oakman and Overman (2014). Sites such as Cana and Jotapata in central Galilee were situated close to Agrippa II's kingdom, but not within it. However, their economic and social conditions were very comparable to those of, say, Gamala.
- 408 Aliquot 2009, 311; see [Section A1.2.1](#).
- 409 Sartre 1999.
- 410 *IGLS* 15.103; cf. Sartre 2005, 79; see [Section A1.6.1](#).

- 411 *IGLS* 15.107; cf. Sartre 2011, 226–27; see [Section A1.6.2](#).
- 412 *IGLS* 15.228; cf. Isaac 2017, 153–54; see [Section A1.6.4](#).
- 413 See Mazzilli 2018 for the Ḥaurān (Auranitis); Dar 1993 for Mount Hermon (in Ulatha).
- 414 Mazzilli 2018, 44–48.
- 415 *RPC* 2, nos. 2265, 2269 = *TJC*, nos. 153, 161; *RPC* 2, nos. 2266, 2270 = *TJC*, nos. 154, 162.
- 416 *RIC* 2.1², Dom. nos. 207, 209.
- 417 *RPC* 2, no. 2261 = *TJC*, no. 149.
- 418 Maltiel-Gerstenfeld 1980.
- 419 For *Sebastē* as ‘Pietas’, suggested by Y. Meshorer in *TJC*, p. 236; cf. *RIC* 1², Tib. no. 43; *RIC* 2.1², Titus nos. 407–408. For *Sebastē* as Julia Augusta, the daughter of Titus, proposed by A. Burnett, see Burnett 2012.
- 420 *RPC* 2, nos. 2296–99 = *TJC*, nos. 179–82.
- 421 *RPC* 2, no. 2092 (the date in *RPC* 2.1, p. 296, of 93/94 CE is incorrect). For the Pompeian era, see Schürer 1979, 152 and nn. 357–58. The previous local issues of Canatha had been struck in 49/50 CE (City Year 112), under Claudius (*RPC* 1, no. 4838).
- 422 There is another inscription, *IGLS* 15.340 from ‘Ariqah (Roman Aerita in Trachonitis), dated to the first year of Nerva.
- 423 In *AJ* 20.267, we are informed that Josephus completed the *Antiquitates* in ‘the thirteenth year of the reign of Domitian Caesar and the fifty-sixth of my life’, that is, in 93/94 CE.
- 424 Millar (1993, 91–92; cf. Kokkinos 2003; 1998, 396–400; *RPC* 2.1, p. 309 (Agrippa II’s eras).
- 425 Phot., *Bibl.*, cod. 33; see Kokkinos 1998, 396–99; 2003. Photius’ statement was upheld in the original edition of Schürer’s, magisterial history (1890, 1.2, 205–206) and more recently by D. R. Schwartz (1992, 272–75) and Sartre (2005, 80, 101), among others.
- 426 Kokkinos 2003, 175; 1998, 397; Rajak 1973, 362.
- 427 *V* 359, and he speaks of Agrippa in the past tense in *V* 367.
- 428 See *V* 430; *AJ* 20.266–67. This evidence is briefly discussed in Rajak 1973, 354 n. 1.
- 429 Kokkinos 2003, 163–67; cf. Schürer 1973, 481–83 and n. 47; Rajak 1973, 362.
- 430 Haensch 2014, 110–11.
- 431 Alternative dates are left open by Den Hollander (2014, 273).
- 432 Sartre 2005, 80; cf. Kokkinos 1998, 338; 2003, 168.
- 433 Kokkinos 1998, 254, 312–13. This Alexander was a descendent of Herod the Great through his son of the same name. After relinquishing his portion of Cilicia, Alexander junior went on to enter the Roman Senate and elevated to the position of *consul suffectus* sometime between 94 and 110 CE. His two sons Gaius Julius Agrippa and Gaius Julius Alexander Berenicianus followed their father to the Senate, the latter being appointed *consul suffectus* for the period October–December 116 CE and in 132/33 CE becoming Roman Proconsul of Asia under the emperor Hadrian (idem, 256–57). Josephus remarks that the descendants of Herod through his son Alexander abandoned Judaism in favour of a Greek way of life (*AJ* 18.141). The same can be said of most of Herod’s other offspring.
- 434 Agrippa’s death was certainly noticed by Agrippa’s subjects. There are four Safaitic inscriptions referring to ‘the year Agrippa died’ (*OCIANA* 0032317, 0032320,

0032322, 0032323, 0035833), but they all fail to explicitly specify the year, nor for that matter which Agrippa is being referred to, although we can reasonably suppose that it is Agrippa II.

435 Kokkinos 1998, 254–58.

436 An evolving Roman policy towards client states, as a whole, is not contradicted by the continuation of a small sprinkling of residual client kingdoms like the Bosporus and Armenia at the extreme edges of the Empire. See the discussion of the value of client kingdoms to Rome and the criteria determining their annexation in Braund 1984, 181–91. Braund is reluctant to accept the *clientela* policy of Rome as a stopgap, but the facts speak for themselves – namely, a whittling down of client kingdoms from the beginning of the 1st century to the year 106 CE, when the Nabataean kingdom was annexed at the death of Rabbel II (Millar 1993, 92–93).

9 Conclusions

Agrippa wore the royal diadem for about 46 years, enjoying an exceptionally long reign by the standards of his times. The length of his kingship exceeded those of any other member of the Herodian dynasty, including his far more famous ancestor, Herod the Great.⁴³⁷ He lived through the reigns of four of the five Julio-Claudian emperors and almost made it to the end of the Flavian dynasty. Yet, Agrippa had hardly anything to show by way of achievements for all those years and with his demise the Herodian dynasty came to an abrupt end. He was largely forgotten and his kingdom was completely erased from the political map. As far as we know, during his long reign the only city that he refounded was Caesarea Philippi (Paneas), but the new name that he gave it at the time, Neronias, was scrapped after less than a decade, on the death of Nero.

The Judaeen-Roman War was played out in the middle of Agrippa's reign. On the one hand, Agrippa was nurtured from childhood in a Roman cultural and political milieu, but, on the other, he inherited the legacy of his father, Agrippa I, as a champion of the Jewish nation and religion, in addition to fulfilling the expected role of a Roman client king as a benefactor of Graeco-Roman cities and institutions. Before the outbreak of the War, Agrippa II continued to follow the delicate path trod by his father, patronising Jews, Greeks, Romans and 'Syrians' alike, although he made some rather ill-judged interventions which did not redound to his credit. Nonetheless, with his connections to the highest echelons in both Rome and Judaea, he was probably the best placed individual to prevent or limit the War that brought about the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple. Yet he failed to act when the leading voices in Jerusalem implored him to use his influence to get the oppressive Roman governor, Gessius Florus, removed from office. Agrippa's unwillingness to intervene merely brought home the fact that he was a dutiful representative of Roman authority. The Jewish insurgents were under no illusion on this score all along and therefore did not differentiate between the cities in his domain and those under direct Roman administration when staging their insurrection.

The War changed everything, including Agrippa's own prospects. The desperate reaction by Jewish traditionalists to the heavy hand of the Roman provincial administration can be viewed as the inevitable fallout of a creeping process of Graeco-Roman acculturation of Judaeian society, which had been driven by Herod the Great, Agrippa II's great-grandfather. This process was manifested in his monumental building programme, the introduction of Roman spectacles, the importation of Roman technology and through a plethora of other changes that filtered down into Jewish society, although it had altered the social and religious fabric of Judaea only superficially. The callous and exploitative behaviour of various Roman governors, particularly those who held office after the interlude of Judaeian autonomy under Agrippa I, fed the appetite for rebellion.

As client monarch serving Rome's interests, it was Agrippa's duty to remind his Jerusalem audience in the summer of 66 CE that the Jews of Judaea were a subject people of the Roman Empire and to caution them to remain loyal to Rome, even if that meant having to endure onerous governors. The only crumb of comfort (if one could call it that) Agrippa held out to his audience was the faint hope that the successor to Gessius Florus would treat the Jews with more consideration. According to Agrippa's logic, as they were rash enough to ultimately reject his 'prudent' advice, this disobedient people deserved what was coming to them and he could wash his hands of the troublesome Jews (*BJ* 2.401).

When he had assumed responsibilities for the Jerusalem Temple after the death of his uncle, Herod of Chalcis, Agrippa II acquired some semblance of the position of 'ethnarch' of the Jewish nation and with it a certain authority and prestige. However, this was not an essential accoutrement of his client kingship, which did not encompass the Judaeian heartland, and the loss of that 'ethnic' role with the defeat of the rebellious Jews hardly impacted on his sovereignty.⁴³⁸ His senior officials, too, were mostly gentile, and included at least a sprinkling of officials who had achieved Roman citizenship, such as Lucius Obulnius and Titus Mucius Clemens, whose funerary epitaph has been found at Bir al-Malik, between Dor(a) and Atlit on the coast of Israel.⁴³⁹ Having been relieved of all duties and responsibilities on behalf of the Jews, he simply scrubbed them from his agenda.

Agrippa is likely to have been aware that, towards the end of Nero's reign, Rome was plunged into a deep financial crisis and, on top of that, Nero had become unpredictable and erratic in his behaviour. According to Suetonius, by the 60s CE, 'he showed neither discrimination nor moderation in putting to death whomsoever he pleased on any pretext whatever' (Suet., *Nero* 37.1). Although this

comment by Suetonius is probably an exaggeration, it might have been hazardous for Agrippa to have approached Nero to request the emperor's assistance in assuaging the demands of restive subjects. Roman emperors did not take kindly to client kings engaging in any activity that might have been perceived to have a semblance of disloyalty or was critical of imperial policies.⁴⁴⁰ Dio Chrysostom, the 1st century CE Greek orator, points out the danger in bringing complaints against Roman governors to higher authorities:

For to make many accusations has ere been held to be a sign of malicious prosecution, especially when the accusation involves men in authority, and is brought before men in authority. For people suspect that the hostility arose not because you were treated too severely, but because you were unwilling to submit to authority.

(Dio Chrys., *Or.* 34.9)

It appears that Archelaus I Philopatris fell afoul of Emperor Tiberius and was stripped of his position as a client king of Cappadocia on such grounds.⁴⁴¹ We have seen something similar when Agrippa I brought accusations against his uncle Herod Antipas of disloyalty to Rome. In his turn, Agrippa I received a reprimand from Rome when he began building a new north wall in Jerusalem without prior consent. Likewise, the gathering of client kings to a conclave at Tiberias at the invitation of Agrippa I was viewed as a potential threat to Rome and promptly broken up. Yet another client king, Antiochus IV Epiphanes of Commagene, who had fought on the side of Rome in the Judean-Roman War and distinguished himself in the siege of Jerusalem (*BJ* 2.500, 3.68; 5.460–65), came unstuck on the mere suspicion of conspiring to rebel against Rome with Parthian help (*BJ* 7.219–43). That this was probably no more than an unsubstantiated rumour is borne out by the fact that when Lucius Caesennius Paetus, the Roman legate for Syria, invaded Commagene at the head of the VIth Legion in 72/73 CE, Antiochus meekly submitted to Paetus, hoping to prove his innocence before Emperor Vespasian.⁴⁴² Even though the charges against him were afterwards dropped, Antiochus was nevertheless stripped of his kingdom.⁴⁴³

In the case of Judaea, those who petitioned Agrippa II to intercede with Nero on the eve of the War were not even his own subjects. Indeed, most of the population of his realm were 'Syrian' gentiles, who were habitually at loggerheads with the Jews. Moreover, there is evidence that, like his great-grandfather, Herod the Great and father Agrippa I, he patronised the Jewish Temple and pagan cults alike, in conformance with the norms of Graeco-Roman ruler ideology, which encouraged the noble virtues of *euergesia* (benefaction) and *eusebia* (piety).⁴⁴⁴ It was the duty of a ruler to honour the traditional cults of

all his subjects.⁴⁴⁵ Thus, we have tantalising evidence of Agrippa's patronage of a pagan sanctuary at Şur al-Lejā (Saura) in Trachonitis.⁴⁴⁶ A more definite example is the honorific inscription to Agrippa and Berenice in a sanctuary dedicated to Atargatis at Qalaat Faqrā in Arca. That female deity was popular with the local population (see [Sections A1.1.4](#) and [A1.5.3e](#)). Either Agrippa II or his father were honoured at the temple of Baalshamim at Sī' (Seeia) for some benefaction.⁴⁴⁷

Agrippa II was a fifth-generation Roman citizen,⁴⁴⁸ and his extended upbringing at the imperial court would have instilled him with Roman values. Such an outlook distanced Agrippa considerably from the outlook and conservative religious values of Jews steeped in their ancestral traditions, more so than his father who had some familiarity with his Hasmonaeen grandparents and their heritage.⁴⁴⁹ From the textual sources, we learn that Agrippa II's social circle comprised members of the imperial court, Roman governors, various imperial representatives and other client kings. When Paul remarks to Agrippa during their encounter in Caesarea Maritima that he considered the king to be an expert in Jewish matters (Acts 26.2–3), he may have believed this to be the case, but it is also possible that he was being sarcastic.⁴⁵⁰

Agrippa II's contemptuous attitude to even the more responsible and conciliatory elements among the Jewish leadership generated much resentment, making it virtually impossible for him to gain their trust and win over their followers. His antipathy towards the Jewish elite was manifested during Neapolitanus' mission to Jerusalem on behalf of Cestius Gallus, as reported by Josephus (*BJ* 2.333–38), no doubt exacerbated by Agrippa's earlier spats with the Jewish establishment, especially the dispute over his dining-room in Jerusalem (*AJ* 20.189–96) and by his pandering to the Levites over their demand for linen vestments on a par with the priests (*AJ* 20.216–18). Agrippa's frequent replacement of High Priests from c. 59 CE onwards is yet another symptom of his failure to achieve a satisfactory accommodation with the priestly establishment in Jerusalem.⁴⁵¹

If Agrippa had handled these issues more adroitly, it just might have been possible to build an 'anti-war coalition', to use modern parlance, and make a concerted attempt to isolate and neutralise the extremists. Although there was a longstanding antipathy between the Herodian party and the priestly élite, including its more moderate elements, both groups ultimately shared a common interest in preventing a damaging conflict with Rome. The amicable relationship that was struck between Josephus, who was himself of priestly lineage, and Agrippa illustrates what might have been possible. However, even if a united leadership of that kind had come about, it is far from certain

that the militants would have lost their popular appeal, in view of the deep fissures that had developed within Jewish society. Even among the priestly hierarchy, there was no unanimity. D. R. Schwartz has presented evidence from Josephus and Rabbinic sources to argue that the lower rungs of the priesthood were at loggerheads with the High Priestly élite, which benefited more from Agrippa II's favour.⁴⁵² Schwartz believes that negative notices about Agrippa in Josephus derive from a priestly source hostile to the king.

The possibility that Agrippa II might have stuck his neck out in a bid to convince the Roman authorities to address justifiable grievances of Judaeans was slim indeed and his chances of achieving such an outcome through subtle diplomacy was miniscule. The brusque manner in which the impudent Gessius Florus, a mere equestrian, was able to brush aside Berenice, a Herodian queen, when she appeared before him to halt the outrages perpetrated by his soldiers against the townfolk of Jerusalem, highlights the feebleness of the client monarchies in the face of Roman might.

So, there is an inevitability about the War that came to pass. When the conflict broke out Agrippa found that the majority of the Jews had turned their backs on him, save for scattered clusters of loyalists among the élites in Galilee and Judaea and most of the small Babylonian-Jewish community in Batanaea, which Herod the Great had settled to help combat brigandage in the bleak basalt plains east of Lake Tiberias.

Agrippa II lacked the courage and acumen of his father who, at considerable risk, had succeeded in resisting Caligula's demand to have a statue of himself raised in the Temple of Jerusalem. When faced with the impending War, the younger Agrippa chose the safe option of meekly affirming his unconditional loyalty to Rome. His final rupture with the Jewish population at large was set in motion by his humiliating rebuff on the eve of the War at the hands of the Jerusalem populace, which had hoped in vain that he might offer them the prospect of relief from the heavy hand of the Roman provincial administration. For a brief moment, Agrippa displayed some pluck by intervening at Tiberias on the side of the loyalists to reassert the city's allegiance to Rome, thereby saving it from disaster. The fact that Tiberias was an important city in his own domain and that he needed to demonstrate to Vespasian, as Rome's senior representative, that he was fit to be left in charge of a client kingdom, must have obliged Agrippa to take the initiative on that occasion.

Disloyalty shown towards him by Jewish communities within his own kingdom, particularly the inhabitants of Tarichaea and Gamala, deepened the chasm between the king and the Jewish mainstream. His attempts to parley with the rebels ended ignominiously after he was

struck by a stone hurled from the walls of Gamala. Agrippa does not appear to have lifted a finger to try to save the Sanctuary from destruction, despite the fact that the care of the Temple was one of his appointed duties. Another stain on his character was his implication in atrocities perpetrated against prisoners of War in the Roman celebrations held in his capital, Caesarea Philippi. Agrippa had no scruples in actively participating in the siege of Jerusalem and afterwards glorifying the Roman victory, as attested on the numerous coins issued by him devoted to the *Judaea Capta* theme.⁴⁵³ However, he seems to have been keen to downplay his darker deeds because Josephus skirts around them in the *Bellum*.

It is a fact that Agrippa never again concerned himself with Jewish affairs and there is no known instance during or after the War where Agrippa II pleaded in favour of Jewish rights or against injustices suffered by them, as he had successfully done on more than one occasion prior to the War. It should be noted that he did not follow his father's example in acting on behalf of diaspora communities. So long as the institution of the Temple operated, there was considerable kudos to be gained for Agrippa by patronising the Jews and representing their interests, as well as by outwardly observing Jewish customs.⁴⁵⁴ It is not known if his later disengagement from Judaea and Jews generally made Agrippa II more palatable to a gentile public which had borne animosity to his father, on account of his conspicuous identification with the Jewish people and religion.⁴⁵⁵

After the destruction of Jerusalem along with its illustrious Sanctuary, there was nothing to be gained from associating himself with a defeated and despised nation and religion. In any case, in his Jerusalem speech on the eve of the War, Agrippa had vowed that should the Jewish militants decide on an armed conflict with Rome, he would abandon the Jewish nation to its fate (*BJ* 2.401). When Josephus met Agrippa in Rome after the War to discuss his account of the conflict, the historian did not mention any interest by the king in the fate of the Jews. It is also no coincidence that we no longer find Agrippa's army under Jewish command and the Zamarid clan seems to have receded into oblivion. Instead, as mentioned earlier, in the 70s CE, we find a Herod son of Aumos, clearly an officer of Arab heritage, occupying the role of Agrippa's *stratēgos* and *stratopedarchēs*, in charge of both the king's cavalry and infantry (*IGLS* 15.103).

As a client king, Agrippa, for all his loyalty to Rome, had fallen short of what was to be expected of him. When some of his own subjects rebelled and broke free of his authority, he had been shown to be incapable of stamping out the insurrection on his own, as exemplified by his miserable failure to deal with the rebels at Gamala in Gaulanitis. The Roman general, Vespasian, who had to be brought

in with his legions to bring Gamala to heel, would have realised when he became emperor that Agrippa was unsuited to being entrusted with the troublesome province of Judaea to rule; the proof is that it did not happen.

Despite his serious failings, Agrippa II receives a generally favourable ‘press’ in the annals of his contemporaries, including the author of the Book of Acts, although, as we have seen, Josephus does include criticisms of him in the *Antiquitates*. On the major issue of his role in the War, Josephus mostly absolves the king of responsibility, casting the lion’s share of blame on the extremists, while at the same time he castigates irresponsible governors.⁴⁵⁶

Agrippa comes across in the pages of Josephus as possessing a middling intellect, although his sister cuts a much more incisive figure. It seems that the king leant on Berenice somewhat for guidance and, to some extent at least, that might account for her role as his *de facto* consort.⁴⁵⁷ Agrippa’s correspondence with Josephus suggests that the king was unable to completely master his first language, Greek, as previously noted (see n. 58). Agrippa’s dull mind might be put down to the considerable inbreeding in his genetic makeup, as both his parents and grandparents were first cousins. In the final analysis, he was insufficiently talented to shoulder the enormous challenge to be effective in navigating Judaea away from the whirlpool of conflict that overwhelmed it some two thousand years ago. While his sister’s passionate love affair with Titus has resonated through the Ages,⁴⁵⁸ Agrippa II has been relegated to the margins of history to the extent that he was denied a walk-on part in the classic 17th century French dramas, *Bérénice* of Jean Racine and *Tite et Bérénice* of Pierre Corneille.

⁴³⁷ Herod the Great’s reign extended just over 35 years from his appointment in late 40 BCE to his death in the spring of 4 BCE; see Schürer 1973, 281–82 n. 3; 326–27 n. 165.

⁴³⁸ See Millar 1996, which addresses the limits to the authority of client kings in the Roman Empire.

⁴³⁹ Titus Mucius Clemens: *SEG* 51.2020 = *CIIP* 2.2123; see [Section A1.5.1](#).

⁴⁴⁰ Braund 1984, 96–97.

⁴⁴¹ Sullivan 1980a, 1160–61.

⁴⁴² *BJ* 7.228, 231. On Caesennius Paetus’ expedition to Commagene, see Levick 2017, 181–82; Mason 2016, 162–65.

⁴⁴³ *BJ* 7.238–43 cf. Bowersock 2005, 58–61.

⁴⁴⁴ For manifestations of Herod the Great’s practice of *euergesia* and *eusebia*, see Jacobson 2001, 34. Examples of Agrippa I’s patronage of pagan cult centres and observances are provided by D. R. Schwartz (1990, 132–33; cf. Kokkinos 1998, 299).

⁴⁴⁵ Agrippa’s officials followed suit. For example, three of the dedicatory inscriptions of Lucius Obulnius, the Roman centurion of Agrippa II, honour deities venerated by

- local communities in Auranthis, one to Atargatis Kyria (*IGLS* 16.269b) and at least one other to Zeus Kyrios (*IGLS* 16.269, 269a); see [Sections A1.5.3c–A1.5.3e](#).
- 446 See [Section A1.6.1](#), pp. 161–62; also Dentzer-Feydy et al. 2017; Weber 2009.
- 447 *PAES* 4A.102; For this temple, see Dentzer-Feydy 2003; Kropp 2013b, 290–302.
- 448 Agrippa's great-great grandfather, Antipater, had been awarded Roman citizenship (*BJ* 1.194; *AJ* 14.137), which was then inherited by his son, Herod the Great and his offspring (Jacobson 1993/94).
- 449 It has to be said, though, that Agrippa I had been given a Roman education and during his formative years spent extended periods of time at the imperial court where he was immersed in Graeco-Roman culture and customs (*AJ* 18.143–46; 161–237. Therefore, Agrippa II would not have imbibed much in the way of a Jewish lifestyle from his home environment. In fact, Agrippa *père* sponsored a gladiatorial spectacle in the amphitheatre he donated to Berytus in which 1,400 men died in the bloodthirsty entertainment (*AJ* 19.337). This was a wanton sacrifice of human life on a large scale, which would have horrified observant Jews.
- 450 Mason 2003a, 164.
- 451 Goodman 2017, 88–91, It is noteworthy that the disclosures of friction between Agrippa II and the priestly élite by Josephus are reported not in the *Bellum*, but in the *Antiquitates*, which was circulated when Agrippa was no longer present in Rome, and most probably no longer alive.
- 452 Schwartz 1982.
- 453 It is perhaps significant that the only coin issued by Agrippa's cousin Aristobulus (son of Herod of Chalcis), King of Armenia Minor, under the Flavians was struck in his 17th regnal year, which corresponds to 70/71 CE, the year of Titus' conquest of Jerusalem and triumph in Rome with his father and must have been intended to commemorate that victory.
- 454 It is striking, though, that Agrippa II did not cultivate a reputation for piety among the Jews to the extent that his father Agrippa I and sister Berenice did (Sartre 2005, 101). However, when Neapolitanus, the tribune of the Roman governor of Syria, Cestius Gallus, was escorted on a tour of Jerusalem in the company of Agrippa just before outbreak of the War, we are told that he entered the Temple precincts to 'pay his devotions' and Agrippa II must have done so as well (*BJ* 2.341).
- 455 When Agrippa I died during celebrations at Caesarea Maritima in 44 CE, his troops from that city and Sebaste (Samaria), who comprised local 'Syrians', expressed their glee, shouting obscenities about the deceased and carted off statues of Agrippa's daughters to the local brothels (*AJ* 19.356–57); such was their hostility towards the king.
- 456 However, as D. R. Schwartz (2005, 75) points out, Josephus charges Agrippa II with a degree of responsibility for the divine punishment that had been meted out to Jerusalem because he had given in to the demand by the Levites to wear linen robes on equal terms with the priests (*AJ* 20.218).
- 457 Instances of Berenice's strong personality and 'upper hand' wielded over her brother are enumerated by Tomson (2017b, 439).
- 458 Notable among the literary works inspired by this romance is the imaginative denouement composed by the distinguished Roman historian, Ronald Syme, and rendered in fluent Tacitean Latin (Syme 1991).

Appendix 1. Inscriptions relating to the reign of Agrippa II (David F. Graf)

Most of the epigraphic evidence for the rule of Agrippa II is concentrated in Trachonitis, Batanaea and Auranitis in the regions of southern Syria that he administered, with a few notable exceptions from Lebanon and one from Israel. This is significant, as Agrippa's predecessors had minimal epigraphic impact on the region. In spite of Herod's massive building projects in Judaea, they have no epigraphic support, where epigraphic evidence is almost all from outside his kingdom (Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014). The exception is from Seeia (Sī') in Auranitis, a statue erected in his honour by a local family (*IGLS* 16.262), perhaps a dedication at the Nabataean temple of Baalshamin (Dentzer 1979, 325–32), but it is not clear if he was the patron of the sanctuary (Mazzilli 2018, 45–47; see Dentzer-Feydy 2003 for recent excavations at the site). A group of texts from the sanctuary for Baalshamin (*PAES* 4A.100–107) include several of Herod's successors. One mentions Philip the Tetrarch, a Nabataean inscription addressing him as 'Lord' (*mrn'*) dated to 29/30 CE (*PAES* 4A.101 and Starcky 1985, 175), on a base of a statue dedicated by locals to a notable in their community (Nehmé 2010, 482; Offord 1919). For Agrippa I, we are dealing with only scraps (Kokkinos 1998, 296 n. 113 for a possible text from Jericho; cf. Haensch 2014, 105 n. 37) and uncertainty: a Nabataean inscription in elegant script on a basalt block from Sī' refers to a 'King Agrippa' (*hgrp' mlk'*), but it is not clear if Agrippa I or Agrippa II (53–93 CE) is intended (*PAES* 4A.102 = *CIS* 2.163 = *RES* 1091; corrected by Starcky 1985, 175 and cf. Nehmé 2010, 482). The brief text prohibits us from determining whether King Agrippa I or his son Agrippa II is intended.

The same ambiguity plagues the Greek inscriptions that refer to 'King Agrippa', since both kings, father and son, employed the same titulary. For example, whether the simple 'King Agrippa' (*Basileōs Agrippa*) appears in a text, or the more elaborate the 'Great King Agrippa our lord' (e.g. *IGLS* 15.103: *Basilei Megalō Agrippa Kyriō*), it is difficult to determine which Agrippa, father or son, is indicated.

Nevertheless, in some cases, it is possible to distinguish Agrippa II from his father when there are some chronological clues in the content of the inscription.

1. The short reign of Agrippa I, means that regnal years in a text exceeding seven must refer to Agrippa II. For example, in *IGLS* 15.362, ‘In the year 22 of the King’ must refer to Agrippa II.
2. In several inscriptions, two different eras are used for King Agrippa, reflecting the addition of territories to his kingdom, indicating that King Agrippa II is at issue. The first principal era of Agrippa II began in 55/56 CE, another in 60/61 CE, as explained in [Section A2.1](#). These eras are dependent only on numismatic evidence, with the two eras separated by five years and which appear in widely scattered inscriptions from Batanaea (*IGLS* 14.559), Auranitis (*IGLS* 16.197), and Lebanon/Phoenicia (Aliquot 2009, 135 and n. 53). The downside is that when only one regal date is used in a text, the exact date is ambiguous, but it is probably that in the era of 60/61 CE.
3. When the name of the king is missing at the beginning of a text, but the content replicates one or more other texts where Agrippa II is explicitly referred to, particularly at the same site. This situation appears to be the case in three inscriptions from Halbūn near Abila, where two have a full titulary (*SEG* 7.216, 217) and the other is partial and fragmentary (*SEG* 7.218).
4. Some confusion also may exist when the names ‘King Agrippa’ and ‘Queen Berenice’ occur together in the same inscription, bearing in mind that Berenice was the daughter of Agrippa I as well as the *de facto* consort of Agrippa II. In several cases, her name occasionally appears alongside that of her father, Agrippa I (see A1.1.1 and A1.1.2).

It is our impression that the majority, if not all, of the Greek, Aramaic and Safaitic inscriptions referring to ‘King Agrippa’ relate to Agrippa II and postdate the Judaean-Roman War (often referred to as the First Jewish Revolt).

A1.1 Honorific inscriptions of Agrippa II

A1.1.1 Athens, IG² 2.3449 = OGIS 428

There is a dedication to Berenice at Athens dated 61 CE (Macurdy 1935, 246 n. 2), where she is mentioned as the daughter of King Agrippa (I), but her brother Agrippa II is absent:

The council of the Areopagus and the council of the 600 and the people honoured

Julia Berenice, great queen, daughter of King Julius Agrippa and descendant of great kings, benefactors of the city through her providence, administrator (epimelētēs) of the city being Tib(erius) Claudius Theogenes of Paeania

In addition to this honorific inscription at Athens mentioning Berenice, and one at Apamea in northern Syria possibly mentioning either Agrippa I or II (see p. 26 n. 92), there are the following:

A1.1.2 Beirut, ancient Berytus, AE 2006.1578 = IGLBibbia 41; see Figure 3.3

A monumental three-line Latin inscription commemorating the Herodian kings at Berytus on six connected parts of an architrave is preserved in the Beirut museum (see Aliquot 2009, 217 n. 129). The six distinctive columns associated with the architrave may have belonged to a monumental portico. The preserved section of the inscription names Berenice and her father, although the full inscription may have included her brother, Agrippa II. As reconstructed by Haensch (2014, 107), it reads:

[The great King Agrippa, friend of Caesar (philokaisar) and Qu]een Berenice, [children] of the Great King A[grippa restored the baths(?) of Colonia Julia Augusta Felix Berytus th]at their ancestor, King Herod, had built [and which had fallen into decay with] ag[e ... and embellished it with statues] of marble and six columns ...

A1.1.3 Baalbek, ancient Heliopolis, IGLS 6.2759 = CIL 3.14387 = ILS 8957

Either Agrippa I or II was honoured with a statue at Heliopolis (Baalbek) as *patronus coloniae* of Berytus, which then had jurisdiction over the cult centre of Heliopolis. The statue base carries a Latin inscription naming ‘King Agrippa’ as a patron.

To the great King Agrippa, the pious (eusebēs), friend of Caesar (philokaisar) and friend of the Romans (philorōmaios), patron of the colony, [a statue] erected at public (expense).

A1.1.4 Qalaat Faqrā (Arca), SEG 49.2011 = Rey-Coquais 1999, 638–40, no. 6

The small temple at Qalaat Faqrā, in far-flung Arca, bears a dedicatory inscription to the Syrian goddess Atargatis that mentions both Agrippa II and his sister Berenice:

For the salvation of lord King Marcus Julius Agrippa and lady Queen Berenice, the goddess Atargatis of the ... raboi ... has consecrated [this] on account of Gaius Mansuetus, high priest (archiereus) and administrator (epimelētēs).

The Roman citizenship bestowed on the Herodian line is affirmed by

the Julius gentile, attested by Herod the Great only in an inscription from Kos (*SEG* 44.1131 with Jacobson 1993–94, 31–35). Other dedications of the temple dating to the reign of Claudius, one specifically to 43/44 CE (Rey-Coquais 1999, 635–38 nos. 4–5), indicate the date of construction of the temple, and perhaps the introduction of the Imperial Cult by the Ituraean tyrant Lysanias that continued under Agrippa I and Agrippa II during the 1st century CE (Aliquot 2009, 199). The cult of Atargatis has a long ancestry in Phoenicia and Syria (see [Section A1.5.3e](#)). The restoration of the broken fragment ‘... *rabōn*’ as *Arabōn*, ‘Arabs,’ seems plausible, but Aliquot suggests it may be a toponym (with a plural ending) or the name of a person (e.g. *Strabōn*; Aliquot 2009, 135 n. 54).

A1.2 Administrative edicts of Agrippa II

A1.2.1 *Yabrūd*, ancient *Iabruda* (Abilene), IGLS 5.2707

Undoubtedly one of the most interesting inscriptions involving Agrippa II is this edict of the king from Abilene which was found in two courses of limestone, embedded in a modern house on the south side of *Yabrūd*. It concerns an abuse of the local high priesthood of Jupiter Malechiabrud by a local magnate named Samsigeramus, who was harshly dealt with by Agrippa:

King Agrippa, son of King Agrippa [great king, philokaisar], eusebēs, [philorōmaios pronounces: Whereas] Samsigeramus, son of S ... [has governed the people of Iabruda?] and seized the priesthood, without regard [for their religion and their rights?]; he, who, for 45 years, it is said, [having held this dignity?], has plundered [the treasure of the god?], transgressing the oaths [required of (?) or pronounced by (?)] his brother ... phas, [introducing?] considerable abuse (?); who willing to transgress [these oaths?] has remained among them; – that similarly [N. and N.] son [or daughter] of Mambogaios (?) [on the domain?] of Zibbaios [... complained that], for 30 years having caused a damage of 300 talents, when he was removed from the priesthood (?), [he kept] all that [was due to the temple?] to all those who were with the god on account and in just rights of interest; – Lysanias, son of T[... testifying?] that according to his [malpractices?] he remains accused of impiety; – I order that Samsigeramos, son of S[... restitutes?] all the property he has retained, in all [...] since the restoration of duties reported above [and be responsible for all] costs incurred [by the plaintiffs] together.

For discussion, see Aliquot (2009, 44–45 no. 31). A terminus post quem of 53 CE is given for this inscription, the year Agrippa received Abilene (to which Iabruda belonged) from Claudius; see Kropp (2013b, 230 n. 45). The name Samsigeramus occurs in the Emesene dynasty, although a king of this line cannot be the subject of this text because Sam(p)sigeramus II ruled from 14–42 CE. For other

consecrations to the deity Jupiter Malechiabrud, see *AE* 1950.232 (altar at Berytus), and *CIL* 6.36792 (dedication to Jupiter Malechiabrud at the Syrian sanctuary on the Janiculum at Rome). For an interesting parallel to this incident at the sanctuary of Zeus-Baalshamin at Dmeir (Thelsae) in the reign of Caracalla in 216 CE, see Roussel and De Visscher (1942–43, 176–94, no. 1).

A1.2.2 Qanawāt (ancient Canatha, Auranitis), IGLS 16.183, 266, 245

No. 183 appears to represent fragments of an edict issued by Agrippa, found on blocks of masonry in secondary use at Qanawāt (Canatha), which begins:

King Agrippa, philokaisar and philorōmaios, enacts ... and then mentions men ... in a state similar to that of wild beasts ... hidden until now and lurking in caves across the country ...

This description, no doubt refers to the bandits and their redoubts in Trachonitis, where brigandage was rampant (Strab. 16.2.18 [755]; *AJ* 15.345–46; with remarks of Isaac 1992, 62–67).

No. 266 comprises 37 fragments of an inscription found in the court of the temple of ‘Dushara’ by the Princeton expedition in 1905 and 1909 (18 fragments) and the French expedition in 1986 (19 fragments). They appear to have been originally part of a six-line inscription that was placed on the facade of the temple. Much is missing and Littmann judged it to be impossible to restore: the additional fragments found in 1986 fail to resolve the puzzle. The name of the emperor Claudius, which occurs, would suit either Agrippa I or Agrippa II. Some of the newly discovered fragments (with words ‘cease’ and ‘achieve’), combined with the snippets of **no. 183**, suggest it may have to do with the restitution of order to the region. Fragments of similar nature found in a house in the village (**no. 245**) suggest that there may have been two copies of the edict.

A1.3 Commercial regulations of Agrippa II

Region of Tiberias (Galilee). SEG 52.1693–94; cf. Kushnir-Stein 2002

Two lead market seals, both believed to come from the vicinity of Tiberias (the first one was acquired from the antiquities market with unsure provenance and the second found in Migdal [Magdala]) just north of Tiberias. These have the following inscriptions on their two sides:

A1.3.1 A. Year 22 of our lord, King Agrippa (= 77/78 or 82/83 CE). An eighth / B. When R[...] Rufus and Iulius [...]bo[...]os were agoranomoi

A1.3.2 A. Year 23 of the great King Agrippa, our lord (= 78/79 or 83/84 CE) / B. Iaesaias son of Mathias and Animos son of Monimos being agoranomoi.

A1.4 Building inscriptions during the reign of Agrippa II

A1.4.1 Maad near Byblos. Aliquot 2009, 135 and n. 53; SEG 46.1781 = Chausson and Nordiguian 1996, 40–43, no. 1

Fragment of a sandstone altar stored in the vestibule of the Byzantine church at Maad bears a very damaged inscription. Aliquot has emended and offered a new reading of lines 1–2 of this inscription, so that it runs:

*[In the y]ear 10 which is also (the year) 1[5] of lord King [Agripp]a (69/70 CE).
To the holy lord and lord of all the universe, the god Satra[pe]s [...] did (this) ...*

Contrary to the coins and two other inscriptions of Agrippa bearing double dates, the year according to the king's earlier era is given before the later one, that is, if Aliquot's reading is correct.

A1.4.2 Halbūn (ancient Helbon, Abilene)

Three building inscriptions were discovered in 1928. They are now in the Damascus Museum. Only the first enables us to know for sure that the structure was built during the reign of Agrippa II (see Aliquot 2009, 77, 318–20). It comes from an architrave of a stoa, which was discovered incorporated into a fountain in front of the mosque:

A1.4.2a SEG 7.216; Rostovtseff 1928, 213

[During the time] of the great [Ki]ng Marcus Iu[lius Agrip]pa, who is (descended) from the great Kin[g Agripp]a, eusebēs, philokaisar [and philorō]maios, the portico (was created) from priest[ly] (funds?) ...

The second building inscription from Halbūn was found on a stone block in a garden, and its attribution to the reign of Agrippa II has been inferred from the wording of the other text:

A1.4.2b SEG 7.217 = OGIS 420; Rostovtseff 1928, 213

During the time of the great King Marc[us Iulius Agrippa, who is (descended) from the great king Agrippa, philo]kaisar and philorōmaios [such and such, from] their own (expense) dedicated (or offered) through the epimelētēs o[f the aforementioned] ...

A third small fragment of an inscription from Halbūn appears to be closely linked to the other two and therefore probably belonging to the reign of Agrippa II:

During the time of the g[reat] king ... Mambogaios L ...

A1.4.3 Agrabat (Batanaea), IGLS 14.512 = OGIS 423

This large village is located in the north of Batanaea, just 16 km north-west of al-Sanamayn (see *IGLS* 14.559). Another dedication, to Heracles by a Zenodorus son of Klymenos, is by the *epimelētēs* of the temple (*IGLS* 14.513), a rare indication of village administration in the region. It is also one of the villages recognised as a *mētrokōmia* (see [Section A1.7](#)) in the Roman era (*IGLS* 14.518 [of Tetrarchic date]).

In the 18th year of our lord King Agrippa, Aoueidos son of Maleichathos made for Zeus Kyrios the doors with their ornamentation and the altar at his own expense, out of his piety.

The date is most likely 77/78 CE of Agrippa's reign. The dedication is by a local inhabitant.

Aoueidos ('Awidh) is a common name throughout south Syria and the patronym appears elsewhere in Batanaea (*IGLS* 14.476, 512; cf. 208a), Trachonitis (*IGLS* 15.76) and also is frequent in Auranitis (*IGLS* 16 *passim*). The decorated gate was perhaps for the entrance to the sanctuary of Zeus Kyrios, to be identified here and elsewhere in the region with Baalshamin ('Lord of the Heavens'; see Mazzilli 2018, 64).

A1.4.4 Al-Sanamayn, ancient Aire (Batanaea), IGLS 14.559 = OGIS 426

Ancient Aire or Aire, 50 km south of Damascus, is one of four villages listed for Batanaea by the geographer Ptolemy (*Geog.* 5.15.26; *IGLS* 14, 529-30). This large and important village, home to two large sanctuaries, was located near the major route leading from Damascus to Adraa (Der'ā). In spite of its size and prominence, it is not attested among the Roman *mētrokōmia*.

Year 37, which is also the year 32 of our lord King Agrippa, Mabbogaios son of Phidon and his sons made/constructed this gate and its small victories and lions, and have placed the doorposts of the gate for Zeus Kyrios, at their expense and piety.

The dedication of this ornamented stone gate is also by a local family. The name Mabbogaios is known throughout the Ḥaurān, also at Senaim on Mount Hermon in ancient Ulatha (in the form 'Mobogeos')

and also more widely in Syria and the Lebanon; see Dar and Kokkinos 1992, 10–13 with fig. 3). However, the Greek patronym Phidon is rare in the East. The importance of the text is that it is dated to the two eras of Agrippa, that of 55/56 and 60/61 CE, yielding a singular date of 91/92 CE. This date is the latest of any of the inscriptions of Agrippa II. *IGLS* 16.1447 = Dunand 1934, 49, no. 75, dated to the 16th year of Domitian (i.e. 95/96 CE), establishes that Agrippa II's reign was over by then.

A1.4.5 Nejrān (Trachonitis), *IGLS* 15.362 = PAES 3A.785

The large village is close to the border of the southern Lejā. This text is a dedication set within a *tabula ansata*, on a lintel block found in reuse in a domestic dwelling near the centre of the village, but was not relocated by Sartre in recent times:

Ameros son of Anamos, son of Garos, of Sara, made [this consecration], the year 22 of the King (76/77 or 81/82 CE).

The *Sarēnos* (*Sara*) in the text could refer to a toponym: there is a Saḥr in northeast Lejā and Sha'ara-Saara in northwest Lejā, but it is possible, as Sartre suggests, that the term may represent an ethnic.

A1.4.6 Si' (ancient Seeia, Auranitis), *IGLS* 16.270 = OGIS 419 = ISyrie 2365

A freedman, Apharaeus, who may have been of Greek heritage, honoured Agrippa II with an inscription on the epistyle of the temple at Seeia (Si'):

To the great king Agrippa, philokaisar, eusebēs and philorōmaios, son of the great king Agrippa, the friend of Caesar, eusebēs and philorōmaios, Aphareus, a freedman and his son Agrippa dedicate (this).

As pointed out by Waddington, this inscription demonstrates that it is impossible to differentiate between the two Agrippas from their epithets alone. The epithet *philokaisar* takes precedence over *philorōmaios*, reflecting that the duty of the client king to the Roman Emperor was paramount. 'Apharaeus' is restored on another dedicatory inscription described by Dar and Kokkinos, and mentioned in A1.4.4. It was found in a temple enclosure at Senaim on Mount Hermon.

A1.4.7 Mushennef (Auranitis), *IGLS* 16.815 = OGIS 418 = ISyrie 2211

Two fragments of a lintel found at the gate or entrance of a temple, constructed as the direct result of Herodian intervention (Mazzilli

2018, 163–65). More specifically, the location designated was ‘outside the wall near the middle of the north side of an ancient temenos’ (AAES 3.380). An inscription for Marcus Aurelius was found next to it dating to 171 CE, a dedication made by Auxi of (the tribe of) Osdilos (AAES 3.379). The inscription reads:

For the safety of our lord King Agrippa and his return, according to a vow, the Synod of Concord built this temple to the ancestral gods Zeus and Athena.

Waddington assumed the king was Agrippa I (ISyrie 2211) and marked his return from Rome in 41 CE. It has also been proposed it could commemorate Agrippa II’s return visit to Mushennef after the Judaeen-Roman War (Haensch 2014, 106). Neither proposal is persuasive, as they fail to explain the ‘vow’ mentioned in the text. Which Agrippa is designated and the meaning of a ‘return’ remains obscure. The importance of the text is that it demonstrates Agrippa’s kingdom in Trachonitis extended to Mushennef on the central highlands overlooking the eastern steppe—this is the farthest east of any royal Herodian inscription. The mention of an ‘assembly’ (*synodos*) in the Ḥaurān is unique, especially for a village, as the term normally appears only later in imperial Greek cities of the region. In this context, it must refer to a construction by a religious confederation and the ‘unity’ (*homonoia*) of a peaceful state that existed between the tribes. It has been surmised that the ‘temple’ (*oikos*) functioned also as is a banquet hall for *thiase* (see Sourdel 1952, 72 n. 6).

A1.4.8 Deir al-Sha’ir (Auranitis), IGLS 16.642 = OGIS 422 = ISyrie 2135

This building inscription is dealt with in A1.5.6.

A1.5 Inscriptions of administrative officials and military officers under Agrippa II

A number of the inscriptions from Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis provide information about the military officers commanding Agrippa II’s army. In general, the organisation of the king’s army seems to have followed the pattern of his Herodian predecessors, which used the titles and presumably the organisation of the Roman army (Shatzman 1991, 208–209). In 37 CE, Caligula dispatched to Agrippa I in Judaea an otherwise unknown Marullus to Agrippa as the ‘commander of the cavalry’ (*hipparchos* or *magistrum equitum*), signalling the continual Romanisation of the Herodian army (AJ 18.237). Eventually, however, Agrippa II was appointing officers from

the local population. During the period of the Judaeo-Roman War, Philip the son of Jacimus was the *stratopedarchēs* of Agrippa II's army (BJ 2.556), that is, his commander-in-chief (see p. 10 n. 34).

Other officers of Agrippa's army appear in Josephus' account of the Judaeo-Roman War. Thus, we encounter Aequus Modius, the 'general' (*stratēgos*) in the siege of Gamala, who also served as his 'viceroy' (*dunasterion*), that is, the administrator of his territory (V 74, 114, 180). Syllas/Sullas appears at the same time as the commander (*hēgemōn*) of his bodyguard, who was responsible for sending cavalry and infantry reinforcements to Julias to support Agrippa II and the Romans against Josephus (V 398–402). One of Agrippa's bodyguard named Justus defected to Josephus' forces (V 397), providing a rare glimpse into the rank and file of Agrippa's army.

A1.5.1 Bir al-Malik (Israel). CIIP 2.2123 = SEG 51.2020 = IGLBibbia 30

This Greek inscription on a marble tablet broken into five surviving pieces was found in 1966 near Bir al-Malik between Dor and 'Athlit on the Mediterranean coast of Israel (Avi-Yonah 1966). The epitaph may be associated with a nearby mausoleum, but this is not certain. The fragmentary state of the text has provoked various interpretations and controversy. A recent translation by W. Eck follows:

For Titus Mucius Clemens, son of eparchos of the army of the Great King Agrippa, assistant (audiutor) of the prefect Tiberius (Julius) Alexander, prefect of the first mounted cohort called [Lepi]diana, assistant of Tiberius Claudius [...] imperial procurator, Simonides and Z[...] for their father to remember him.

Titus Mucius Clemens appears as a Roman citizen of equestrian rank known only from this epitaph. The gaps in the text (including a considerable portion on the right side of the tablet) create speculation on a number of important issues. Some editorial refinements have gained consensus, such as Mucius Clemens' title under Agrippa. The previous faulty reading of line 2 as *sp[...]* is now accepted as better read as *st[...]*, and restored as *of stratou*, indicating he was the 'commander of the army', not just of an individual cohort (Haensch 2014, 112; Schwartz 1984, 241). The auxiliary unit that he served in with Titus Julius Alexander should not be restored as *[Hero]diana* (with Kokkinos 1990, 135), but, as Avi-Yonah (1966, 262–63) originally proposed, the well-attested *cohors prima [Lepi]diana*, which was stationed in Pannonia in 80 CE (CIL 16.26), and Moesia Inferior in 90–112 (CIL 16.45, 58), whereas *Herodiana* remains unattested. In addition, under Tiberius Claudius, the *b[...]* in line 3 probably is not to be restored as *b[eneficiarius]*, but rather *b[oēthōi]*, an *audiutor procuratoris* or 'assistant of a procurator' (Haensch 2014, 112).

Finally, the missing *nomen gentilicium* of Tiberius Claudius might well have been 'Felix,' because Josephus ascribes *Claudius* as Felix's *nomen gentilicium* (*AJ* 20.137 in most mss.), and he may have had first-hand knowledge as a contemporary of the procurator Felix (cf. Kokkinos 1990, 141). However, Tacitus (*Ann.* 12.54; *Hist.* 5.9; cf. *CIL* 5.34) indicates that his *nomen gentilicium* was *Antoninus*, the result of being emancipated by Antonia Minor, the daughter of Mark Antony and mother of the emperor Claudius. The alternative is to make Tiberius Claudius an unknown procurator. Felix as the missing *nomen gentilicium* therefore still remains attractive in this text.

The more fundamental issue of the inscription remains unresolved: whether to interpret the career of Titus Mucius Clemens or his *cursus honorum* in ascending or descending order. Avi-Yonah suggested the latter, making his command under Agrippa the last of his appointments. After beginning his career under the procurator Tiberius Claudius Felix (52–c. 60 CE), it is argued he became attached to the staff of Tiberius Julius Alexander, the prefect of Egypt (66–69 CE), and joined Agrippa's army after the siege of Jerusalem in 69 CE when the two latter leaders were in close contact (Tac., *Hist.* 5.1), ending his military career as commander in King Agrippa's army. But this scenario is seen as reversing the normal sequence of a local military leader being incorporated into a Roman auxiliary unit (Saddington 1982, 70), although it would not be unprecedented (see *AJ* 18.237 and the introduction to this section with A1.5.3. But T. Mucius Clemens is unattested among the military commanders known in Agrippa's army after the Judaeian-Roman War. As a consequence, others interpret his career in ascending order, with his appointment under Agrippa being first and culminating with his position under the procurator Tiberius Claudius Felix as his last appointment (as suggested in *AE* 1967.525). In this case, this career shifts to an earlier stage, beginning under Agrippa I (not Agrippa II), King of Judaea in 37–44 CE, perhaps as a Roman military advisor, then joining the staff of Tiberius Julius Alexander, the governor of Judaea in 46–48 CE, before serving as *audiutor* for the procurator Felix in Judaea in 52–c. 60 CE (Kokkinos 1990, 135–36; Bruce 1978, 35–36). But each proposal has noticeable gaps and problems, prohibiting a definite decision.

A1.5.2 Al-Ḥārrah (Batanaea), IGLS 14.486

Last seen in the Damascus Museum in the 1950s, this dedication is on a basalt altar for a local Baal (Sourdel 1952, 45–46 and pl. IV.1).

To Zeus Beelbaaros, Diomēdēs son of Charēs, eparchos and stratēgos from Batanai[as].

No date is given in the text, but the titles suggest the Herodian period, and a date after the Judaeo-Roman War seems to be appropriate if the following genealogy is accurate. Under Agrippa II, three military prefects (*eparches*) are attested: a Diomēdēs son of Charēs at Deir al-Sha'ir, north of Jebel al-'Arab is designated as the *eparchos* and *stratēgos* of King Agrippa (IGLS 16.642); secondly, an anonymous son of Charēs, the prefect and *stratēgos* of the nomads at Abilene and Chal[ybonides?] (IGLS 16.615), and thirdly, our Diomēdēs son of Charēs, prefect and *stratēgos* of Batanaea (IGLS 14.486). Sartre (2011, 28) believes it is possible the same individual is referred to in the first and third of these texts. But it is unlikely that 'Diomēdēs' can be restored for the name of the anonymous officer in charge of the nomads at al-Hīt, as the break in the text is insufficient for the required eight letters of 'Diomēdēs' (see also A1.5.5). The fact that there were two different men called Charēs from the same region, recorded by Josephus (see pp. 79-80 n. 238), makes it somewhat unlikely that the father of Diomēdēs was a same individual. The name Charēs also appears several times in the village of al-Hīt (see [Section A1.5.5](#)), where a Charēs is mentioned whose son is named Ouaros/Varus and later there is an imperial *stratēgos* named Charēs Heraclitus in the same inscription (IGLS 16.599). Neither of the two Charēs mentioned by Josephus fits the Charēs in these texts, but it seems to indicate there is an onomastic tradition in the village of Eitha and its environs for the names Charēs and Diomēdēs as members of the Herodian and Roman army.

The location of this Baal of Baaros is also a problem. The search for a local toponym in Batanaea has been fruitless, and the identification with Baaras in the Peraea of Transjordan has been proposed (Sourdell 1952, 45; cf. Broshi and Qimron 1986, 207; Cotton and Yardeni 1997, 26–22, nos. 8.1–8.2 [Kefar Baru near Machaerus]), but al-Ḥārrah in Batanaea is more than 150 km to the north in Syria. The identification of an obscure cult at an unidentified location demands some explanation. If Baara is derived from Semitic *b'r* 'to burn', then a location yet unidentified in the Lava Lands of Syria seems as likely a possibility. In my opinion, the location of the Baal of Baaros remains unresolved.

A1.5.3 Lucius Obulnius at Canatha and Seeia in Auranitis

Five inscriptions at Canatha (Qanawāt) and nearby Seeia (Si') are by a centurion named Lucius Obulnius who was in the army of King Agrippa. As his name suggests, he was a native of Rome or Italy, who apparently was detached from his position in the Roman army and co-opted into the army of Agrippa II. The unit he commands, the *ala Augusta*, is attested in texts separated by seven years: the first is dated

to 81/82 and 87/88 CE for the second. Obulnius venerates the gods of Zeus Kyrios (*IGLS* 16.269), Atargatis Kyria (*IGLS* 16.269b), and to another deity whose name is lost but who is called Kyrios or Kyria (*IGLS* 16.269a). His stationing at Canatha (Qanawāt) surely indicates that this settlement was ruled by the Agrippas (*pace* MacAdam 1986, 750). Interest in the site by the Herodians begins with Herod the Great (*IGLS* 16.262 = *OGIS* 415 with Krumeich and Lichtenberger 2014, 178–84; Tholbecq 2007, 298–99), and continues with Philip the Tetrarch (*PAES* 4A.101 = Offord 1919), and King Agrippa (*PAES* 4A.102 = *RES* 1091). The following texts express the continued importance of the settlement for Herodian administration under Agrippa II.

A1.5.3a Canatha (Qanawāt), *IGLS* 16.175

Lucius Obulnius, centurion (ekatontarchēs) of the cohors Augusta, has dedicated...

The *cohors Augusta* that the centurion Lucius Obulnius serves in is restored reasonably in another inscription at al-Hīt that indicates it was a unit in the army of King Agrippa (*IGLS* 16.615). It has also been associated with the ‘cohort Sebaste’ in the New Testament (Acts 27.1; Speidel 1982/83, 237–40).

A1.5.3b Provenance uncertain, *IGLS* 16.197 = SEG 7.970

An inscription on a rectangular plaque once in the Museum at Suweidā’ before 1925 now lost, contains two texts preserved by a copy by Dunand (1934, no. 168). The provenance is not known, but Sartre speculates it is probably from Seeia (Sī’) or Canatha (Qanawāt).

... st[ratop]e darchēs, Lucius Obulnius, centurion of the cohors Augusta, took care of this work, year 21 which is also the year 16 (of King Agrippa).

Year 28 of the Great King Marcus Julius Agrippa; our lord, friend of the emperor, eusebēs and philorōmaios, son of the great king ...

The first text dates to 75/76 CE, and the second to 87/88 CE (based on the era of 60/61 CE). The rare attestation of Agrippa II’s citizenship is noteworthy.

A1.5.3c Seeia (Sī’), *IGLS* 16.269 = *PAES* 3A.774

This was the location of the temple to Baalshamin, where dedications to the deity are attested as early as 109/8 BCE (Milik 2003, 269–74, with his date of 105/4 BCE corrected), with pottery and animal remains of the same period, including later coins of Herod, Philip the Tetrarch and Agrippa II (Mazzilli 2018, 190–95). Found in the ruins at the entrance to the theatre, the two lines of the text appear to attest to

‘Zeus Kyrios’ but the few letters of the second line as read by Magie seem to represent [*Obul*]nius and perhaps was followed by ‘centurion of the *cohors Augusta*’ as in A1.5.3d and A1.5.3e from Seeia (Sī’).

A1.5.3d Seeia (Sī’), IGLS 16.269a = PAES 3A.769 = SEG 7.1100
Found in Court 2, facing the ‘Temple of Dushara’:

[To Zeus Kyri]os [...] *Lucius Obulnius, centurion of the cohors Augusta.*

The centurion Lucius Obulnius appears again here as a Roman mercenary in the service of King Agrippa II, commanding a cohort in his army. The deity (*Kyrios*) mentioned in the dedication probably designates Baalshamin, not Atargatis who has the epithet *Kyria*, as in the following text (IGLS 16.269b), suggesting a series of dedications were made by the centurion to honour the various gods worshipped at Seeia.

A1.5.3e Seeia (Sī’), IGLS 16.269b

In the third court, at the entrance of the sanctuary to the east, a column with an inscription was discovered in 2007 bearing another dedication by the centurion Obulnius:

To the goddess lady Atargatis, Lucius Obulnius, centurion of the cohors Augusta, has dedicated ...

The goddess Atargatis was worshipped throughout Syria and Phoenicia, as well as the Ḥaurān, at Jrein (IGLS 15.293), Suweidā’ (IGLS 16.315), also at Bu’aidān in the environs of Damascus (IGLS 14.611), and perhaps at Nimreh/Nemara (IGLS 16.734). Another dedication in the National Museum at Damascus, undoubtedly from the Ḥaurān, is also to Atargatis (IGLS 14.612). Further west, at Qalaat Faqrā near Abila, a dedication was made to Atargatis in honour of Agrippa II and Berenice; see [Section A1.1.4](#).

A1.5.3f Seeia (Sī’), IGLS 16.269c

Another inscription found at Seeia (Sī’) on a round altar and probably honouring a deity, bears the phrase ‘for the salvation [...] of King Agrippa’. It may be connected with the other dedications of Lucius Obulnius.

A1.5.4 Hebrān (Auranitis), IGLS 16.431a

An inscription was discovered in the house of Sa’id Darwish, located at the rear entrance that probably originally belonged to the 1st-century CE temple in the village (Mazzilli 2018, 169–71). It is fragmentary, preserving only the name and title of ‘*Lucius Obulnius*,

A1.5.5 Al-Hīt, ancient Eitha (Auranitis), IGLS 16.615 = OGIS 421 = ISyrie 2112

In a house in the west of the village, an inscription in a cartouche was recorded by W. J. Bankes and W. H. Waddington. It appears to have been part of the edifice of a public or private building.

Under the King [M. Ju]lius Agrippa [...] Charēs, epa[rchos] (prefect) [...] of the cohorts Au[gusta and strateg]os of the nomads [of Abilen]e [...] and of Chal[ybonitis].

There are many ambiguities in this text. Neither the purpose of the inscription nor the date is provided and it is not clear to which King Agrippa it refers. In addition, there is also a gap in the text after Agrippa of about four to six letters that is difficult to restore. It is not enough space for 'the great' (the typical *megalou* is too long and *megas* is rare). The gap is ostensibly the name of the official whose father's name is Charēs. The name of Diomēdēs son of Charēs at nearby Deir al-Sha'ir who was also a prefect of King Agrippa (IGLS 16.642) is too long to fill fit the gap (of 4 to 6 letters). Dittenberger (in OGIS) suggested Varus for the lacuna citing IGLS 16.609, for a 'Diomēdēs son of Varus' in the Severan period; a Varus son of Charēs and Heraclitus son of Charēs are also known (IGLS 16.599). If this reconstruction is correct, it may to indicate there is an onomastic tradition in the village of Eitha and its environs for the names Charēs, Varus and Diomēdēs as members of the Herodian and Roman army (Sartre 2015, 40–42), who were perhaps descendants of the Babylonian colony founded in Batanaea by Herod in 9–8 BCE (V. 48, 177, 186; cf. BJ 4.18, 68).

The title '*stratēgos* of the nomads of Abilene' appears to represent a Herodian officer, rather than a *nomadic* chieftain (Brüggemann 2007, 278). Sartre (2015, 37–51) suggests as a 'agent of the state', he was also the commander of troops recruited from the nomads employed in maintaining tranquillity in the sedentary villages and with the nomads of the ḥarra on the eastern steppe. Sartre notes IGLS 16.713, for a *stratēgos parembolōn nomadōn* or 'commander of a camp of nomads' at Taymā in Auranitis. A parallel to this title of '*stratēgos* of the nomads' also appears at Malkiyyeh, a village just east of al-Hīt (Eitha), dating after the Roman annexation of Agrippa's territories, which designates a 'Hadrianus surnamed Soaides, son of Malechus', with the same title as in this text, who is also an indigenous officer, implying the Herodian institution continued under Roman rule (IGLS 16.698). The obvious restoration of Chal[...] with 'Chalcidice' is attractive, as this was the region where Arab chieftains ruled and the Scenitae were

dominant in the population (Strab. 16.2.11 [753]), but Josephus indicates Chalcidice was excluded from Agrippa's rule (*BJ* 2.247; *AJ* 20.138). In 72/73 CE, the governor of Syria Caesennius Paetus in his campaign against Antiochus IV of Commagene was supported by a cavalry unit from Aristobulus 'king of the region called *Chalkidikē*' (*BJ* 7.226), which apparently represents Chalcis in Lebanon (Sartre 2011, 27 n. 35), but its association with Agrippa is not apparent (Aliquot 1999–2003, 236–37). It could be argued that the Agrippa in the text refers to Agrippa I, not Agrippa II, who earlier ruled over Abilene and Chalcidice, but there are other proposals for associating the text with Agrippa II. There is a *Chalkidem* mentioned by Pliny (*HN* 5.81) in north Syria, but it seems outside the territory Agrippa administered. Another suggestion by Sartre is that the *Chal*[...] in the text refers not to Chalcidice at all, but another toponym. In the tetrarchy of Lysanias there is a region called *Chalybōnites* (Ptol., *Geog.* 5.15.17), located in a valley parallel to the Antilibanus, and a region appropriate for an officer in charge of nomads (Sartre 2011, 15; 2015, 39 n. 10). His suggestion is included here in this rendering of the text.

The different titles of a *stratēgos* of nomads and a *praefectus cohortis* could be understood as chronologically successive posts in his career. On the other hand, Hadrianus is described as both *ethnarchos* and *stratēgos* of the nomads (as noted in *IGLS* 16.698 above), suggesting the titles are dual or separate posts (Brüggeman 2007, 277–78). It should also be noted that the suggestion that Eitha (al-Hīt) was a military colony was based on a faulty reading of 'Caesarea Eitha' in the text copied by Waddington (*I Syrie* 2113; cf. MacAdam 1986, 61–67), which an unedited copy by William John Bankes shows refers rather to the construction of a *Kaisareion* (see *IGLS* 16.597 and Sartre 2015, 43). For the Herodian colonies, see [Section A1.6](#).

A1.5.6 *Deir al-Sha'ir (Auranitis)*, *IGLS* 16.642 = *OGIS* 422 = *ISyrie* 2135

On a lintel in a building in the ruins of the settlement, there is an inscription in a cartouche in two fragments (Sartre 2011, 219–20).

D[i]omedes, son of Charēs, eparchos of King Agrippa (the) Great erected (this building) from the foundations.

In contrast to Lucius Obulnius, however, there is nothing in Diomēdēs' name or patronym to indicate his foreign origins or, like Herod son of Aumos (*IGLS* 15.103), that he is a native of the region. The patronym of the officer was originally read as *Darēios* (Waddington), but it was later corrected to *Charētos* by Dittenberger (*OGIS* 422), and this was confirmed by autopsy of the stone by Sartre. What led Waddington astray was Josephus' reference to 'Darius' who was cavalry

commander (*hipparchos*) of the 2,000 horsemen sent from Batanaea and Trachonitis by Agrippa II in 66 CE (*BJ* 2.421), but he remains unattested in the epigraphy of the region. This Charēs is possibly to be identified with the Charēs, *stratēgos* of Batanaea, attested in the inscription from al-Ḥārrah discussed above (A1.5.2 = *IGLS* 14.486).

A1.5.7 Unprovenanced (Auranitis?), *IGLS* 16.1475 = *AE* 1966.493

This stone, now in the National Museum in Beirut, very probably was originally from the Ḥaurān. The inscription is incised around the bust of a woman dressed in a tunic (Sartre 2011, 33 with fig. 7). This raises the question as to why this inscription for a centurion was placed on the bust of a woman. Seyrig (1965, 33–34) suggested the woman represented a goddess and the inscription was secondary and it has also been proposed the bust may represent the deceased wife of the official (Yon and Aliquot 2016, 220–21). It reads:

Archieus, who served under King Agrippa a centurion (kenturiōn) for 18 years and under Trajan for ten years.

There are some peculiarities in the language of the text. The name Archieus is a *hapax* (the spelling ‘Archias’ is normal) and the patronym is missing; the title of centurion is not translated but transliterated; the titles also move from the nominative to accusative case, and the purpose of the inscription is not clear. It is not the epitaph of Archieus, since the nominative case is used, suggesting it is a commendation. Use of the term *kenturiōn* for centurion in place of the usual Greek equivalent, *ekatontarchēs*, is symptomatic of Romanisation. The title of ‘centurion’ for Archieus is the same title of Lucius Obulnius (*IGLS* 16.197). The title of *stratēgos*, on the other hand, corresponds to no known title in the Roman army. It may refer to his role with regard to the nomadic or semi-nomadic population.

The importance of the inscription is the chronological information it provides, as discussed in relation to the date of Agrippa II’s death on pp. 133–35. What is missing from the epigraphic record is the Jewish contingent in Agrippa II’s army. Where they appear ironically is as deserters to the Jewish insurgents during the Jewish Revolt of 66–74 CE (Price 1992, 119). Many are prominent former members of Agrippa’s army. In the initial conflict with the Roman army of Cestius Gallus near Jerusalem, Silas the Babylonian distinguished himself, apparently a deserter from the Babylonian colony in Batanaea (*BJ* 2.520), who was later killed in the siege of Ascalon (*BJ* 3.11 and 19). Another is Magassarus, formerly an attendant (*therapōn*) at the court of Mariamme, Agrippa II’s sister, and a soldier of Agrippa, who was active in the defence of Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.474). A third was Justus, a member of Josephus’ bodyguard in Galilee, who formerly served

Agrippa II in a similar capacity (V 397). There are also the two Syrian nobles (*megistanes*) from Trachonitis, with their horses, arms and money, which they had smuggled from the country, who tried to join the forces of the Galilee resistance (V 112). The rank and file of Agrippa's army are also represented among the deserters. Josephus received a letter in Galilee from an insolent cavalryman who had formerly served Agrippa (V 220). Surely these defectors from Agrippa II's army are exceptions, but they signal a mixed reaction to the revolt by Jews serving in his army.

A1.6 The military colonies of Agrippa II

After the death of Agrippa I, his kingdom was annexed by Rome, marked by several inscriptions: one is dated to year 7 of Claudius at Hebrān (CIS 2.170) and another to year 9 at Sūr (Starcky 1985, 180–81). In addition, several local Roman citizens are attested who owe their citizenship to Claudius at Canatha in Auranitis (IGLS 16.184, 218, 223) and Walghā (IGLS 16.64), reflecting the emperor's general policy of extending citizenship to provincials (Sartre 1996, 243). The transition to Agrippa II's rule is well attested by inscriptions, several of which suggest he was responsible for the foundation of a number of military colonies. As stated in the main text (p. 72 and n. 216), in response to the disruptive Trachonitis bandits, Herod the Great had installed a military colony of Idumeans in Trachonitis in c. 10/19 BCE (AJ 16.271–85) and another of Babylonian Jews in Batanaea in c. 7 BCE (AJ 17.23–28). Several newly discovered inscriptions on the western border of the Trachonitis indicate that Agrippa II apparently continued this policy.

A1.6.1 *Şur al-Lejā, ancient Saura (Trachonitis), IGLS 15.103 = OGIS 425*

The ancient village of Şur al-Lejā (Sahr) is located in the central Lejā, about 15 km north of Zorava to the south and 17 km from Saara to the north (Dussaud 1927, 380). In the Roman era, the village had autonomous civic institutions: the *Saurōn to koinon* (IGLS 15.96), 'presidents' (*proedrōn*) of the *mētrokōmias Saurōn* (IGLS 15.104) and other 'administrators' (*diokētōn*) of the *mētrokōmias* (IGLS 15.105). Much of the focus of the Princeton Expedition was on the so-called 'Nabataean' temple west of the ruins (PAES 2, 428–30), although the 2004 French Mission found the plan much more irregular than the earlier explorers had assumed, but confirmed it was a pre-Roman construction consisting of a pavement with votive offerings and a cypress trunk-shaped stele (Mazzilli 2018, 178). The fragmentary statuary of the tribal shrine at Sahr has been reconstructed to reflect

possibly equestrian statues of the military colonists of Agrippa II (Weber 2009, 71–88, 175–219; 2008, 363–67; 2003, 262–66). A more recent appraisal of this statuary is given by Mazzilli (2018, 48–52). In addition, there is a casemate wall north of the village that appears to be pre-provincial and Roman military texts (IGLS 15.95, 98) suggest it was subsequently the location of a Roman garrison, perhaps of Herodian foundation. For the period of Agrippa II, there is the following important text:

For Herod son of Aumos, commander (stratopedarchēs) of the cavalry of the colonists (kolōneitōn) and infantry (stratiōtōn), and who was stratēgos for the great king, our lord Agrippa. His son Agrippa made (this monument) in the year 20 [of Agrippa II's reign].

The patronym ‘Aumos’ is a familiar name in the Lejā and the Ḥaurān, which suggests he is a native Arab of the region (Ptol., *Geog.* 5.15.26, *Trachonitae Arabes*; Sartre 2011, 20). The name ‘Herod’ suggests his father may have served in the Herodian army and that Aumos named his son in honour of the founder of the dynasty and as a mark of his loyalty to the Herodian dynasty. His military post suggests the family loyalty extended to Agrippa II. His father possibly served under either Philip the Tetrarch (4 BCE–34 CE) or Agrippa I (37–41 CE), if not both. The date of the text depends on which era of Agrippa II is meant: the era beginning in 55/56 or that of 60/61, which means the dates could be 74/75 or 79/80 CE, but probably the latter.

The expression ‘cavalry of the colonists’ (*hippeōn kolōneitōn*) has provoked a great deal of discussion. Who are these ‘colonists’ and where is their colony located? It was initially proposed and still maintained by some (Bennett 2011, 258) that their unit was the *ala Augusta Gemina Colonorum* stationed at the Augustan colony at Pisidian Antioch (in IGR 3.1144 and AE 1895.78), which is known from *diplomata* to be in Cappadocia-Galatia in 94 and 101 CE, but whose previous activities are obscure (Saddington 1982, 69–70). Two decurions of the Pisidian colony are known, but both have names bearing the *tria nomina* of Roman citizens (MAMA 8.94, 327). In the Flavian period, its prefect was M. Sentius Proculus (PME S 25) and Sex. Cornelius Dexter under Hadrian, when it served in Judaea (PME C 234). This fits the pattern in the East, where the percentage of Roman citizens in peregrine units was high (Saddington 2000, 172). See [Section A1.6.2](#) for a decurion attested at Şur al-Lejā.

The commander of the Saura unit, however, is a Syrian native – Herod son of Aumos – with nothing to indicate a connection with the Roman veteran colonies in Pisidia, as well as those at Ptolemais in Palestine and Berytus in Lebanon (as earlier noted by Littmann in PAES 3A.797). The *colonia* at Berytus, was a focal point of the

Herodian dynasts beginning with Herod the Great (Millar 1990, 12–14) and his successors including Agrippa II, who were patrons the colony (see pp. 26–27, 51 and [Section A1.1.2](#)), but none of the individuals in our text bear names suggesting they were Roman citizens (*contra* Kropp 2013b, 261–62). More recently, it was proposed that the text is corrupt, and that *kolōneitōn* is a mistake for *Golōneitōn*, representing troops recruited from Gaulanitis, one of the regions ruled by Agrippa II (Sullivan 1977, 343), but this philological hypothesis is devoid of historical basis. It seems much more likely that these were recruits from a Herodian military colony organised into an *ala colonorum* (Saddington 2002, 88; *pace* 1982, 69–70) established on the border of the Lejā perhaps by Agrippa II (IGLS 15, p. 164; cf. IGLS 15.62a), and probably not therefore the Babylonian colonists of Zamaris at Bathyra, as argued by Weber (2009, 71–78) and Mazzilli (2018, 48–53).

The structure of the Herodian army reflected in this text confirms that units were composed of cavalry and infantry, commanded by an indigenous officer as *stratopedarchēs* (see p. 11 n. 34), and probably modelled on Roman lines (Saddington 2002; Shatzman 1991, 208). This may reflect a continuation from Herod’s army, whose commanders of the royal infantry and cavalry bore the Latin names Gratus and Rufus, respectively, presumably Roman citizens with military experience (BJ 2.252–74; AJ 17.275–94). In 37 CE, the emperor Caligula dispatched to Agrippa I in Judaea an otherwise unknown Marullus as the ‘commander of the cavalry’ (*hipparchos* or *magistrum equitum*) signalling the ongoing Romanisation of the Herodian army (AJ 18.237).

A1.6.2 Şur al-Lejā (Saura, Trachonitis), IGLS 15.107

A Funerary stele discovered in a field east of the village, inscribed:

Year 28 of King Agrippa, Ausos son of Aios, cavalry officer (decurion).

The name and patronym are both typical of the Ḥaurān. The title of Ausos indicates he was a native Syrian decurion serving in a cavalry unit in Agrippa II’s royal army. The military officers in the Herodian army were not only Jews and Romans like the centurion Obulnius, but native Syrians. In the Roman army, the commander of *alae* (cavalry units) was a *praefectus equitum*, beneath which were 16 *turmae*, each commanded by a *decurio*, composed of about 30–32 men. If Agrippa’s army is modelled after the Roman army, we may assume a similar organisation. The date is of either the era of 55/56 or 60/61 = 82/83 or 87/88 CE (Sartre 2011, 36 and fig. 8).

A1.6.3 Shā’rah, ancient Saara (Trachonitis). IGLS 15.62a

This plaque was discovered in 2001 and has irregular script and gaps making the reading difficult, but the phrase mentioning a colony is clear. Sartre suspects it relates to the preceding texts of a Herodian colony in [Sections A1.6.1](#) and [A1.6.2](#), probably founded by Agrippa II, rather than a Roman colony. This village is located on the north-western border of Trachonitis, about 5 km south-west of Masmiyeh (Phaena) and just a few km east of the main route leading south from Damascus to Transjordan and Palestine. Saara is therefore situated in an excellent location for controlling both any brigandage of the Lejā and monitoring traffic on the main north-south artery of the region. The plaque reads:

The year 23 of the colony. Raeios son of Naros, of the pol[...] the [t]ribe Aathichenoi has prepared the tomb for himself, for his woman Sodre, for his daughter... and his son Naros... at his expense. It is not permitted to en[ter]...

The date of the construction to the establishment of the colony (83/84 CE based on an era of 60/61 CE) may have relevance to Herodian colonisation in the area. The inscription designates a family tomb for local residents: Raeios (R'y), Naros (Nhr/Nwr) and Sodre (Ṣdr) are all attested in North Arabian Safaitic texts. The papponymy—a grandson taking the name of his grandfather—is also typical in the region. The local names imply the colonists were local recruits, probably by the Herodian administration.

The end of the second and third line of the seven-line Greek text has a few missing letters, and allows for some speculation and conjecture. The fragmentary *pol[...]* followed by *[ylēs]* makes the rendering *pol[itōn p]hylēs* ‘citizen of the tribe’ attractive (Sartre 2011, 46), but this proposal fails to explain the initial ‘A’ before *Athichēnoi* – the name *Athichos* is well known in the Ḥaurān. Sartre proposes a restoration of *pol[....]ylēs* as *pollio uylēs* (for normal *eilēs* = ‘ala’), and interprets the phrase to mean ‘instructor of the cavalry’ and the ‘A’ before *Athichēnoi* as a numeral, that is, the ‘1 [first] *ala Athichēnoi*, constituting an indigenous unit of the Herodian army (Sartre 2011, 47).

The identification of Saar as the location of the colony seems probable (Sartre 2011, 50–54) and the toponym is perhaps mentioned in a Greek inscription from Rome for a Zenodorus son of Ausos, who has the ethnic *Saarēnos* (IGUR 3.8395 as emended by Feissel 1982, 338–39). The patronymn Ausos also is typical of the Ḥaurān (cf. IGLS 15.107) and supports the identification with the Trachonitis village. The recent intensive investigation of the settlement reveals a sizeable village (600 × 500 m) of military character, with a substantial double-course rampart wall which encircles the settlement constructed sometime between the mid-1st and mid-2nd century CE. It encloses

136 buildings including one of fort-like nature in the north-east, and a temple in the south (Clauss-Balty 2010). Its Roman military importance is indicated by a Mithraeum in a cave near the temple (Kalos 2001), perhaps frequented by the legionary detachments of the III Gallica and XVI Flavia Firma attested at nearby Masmiyeh-Phaena (IGLS 15.17–19). There is every reason to suspect that Saara was the location of a military colony founded by the Herodians, and most likely Agrippa II, strategically placed on the border of the Lejā.

A1.6.4 Dhunaybeh, ancient Danaba (Trachonitis), IGLS 15.228

This stray inscribed stone was found in the environs of this village on a promontory located just east of the Damascus-Der'a route, a few km west of Zorava in the far south-west of the Lejā (Mazzilli 2018, 169). Its strategic location made it ideal for a military garrison in antiquity. A small sanctuary to the south-west dates to the 1st century CE (IGLS 15, 289–90) and provides a basis for assigning this honorific inscription to the Herodian period (Sartre 2011, 38 with fig. 9).

The Greeks (Hellēnes) residing at Danaba, to Menophilos, for his benevolence.

The ‘Greeks’ are understood as Herodian mercenaries serving in the 1st century CE. The text also is important for providing the name of the village. The name of the honouree Menophilos is rare, appearing only one other time elsewhere in Syria (IGLS 5.2015). The ethnic of ‘Greeks’ is unusual, and must refer to a foreign group of Greeks established as a military colony in the village (Sartre 2011, 41–42). The foundation of the colony could have originated with Herod, who recruited Gauls, Germans and Thracians for his army (BJ 1.672; AJ 17.198), but it is also possible that Agrippa II was responsible for the foundation of the Greek military colony at Danaba. The village occupies a strategic location on the south-west border of the Trachonitis where, with Saura and Bathyra, it could have been involved in monitoring and controlling the plateau.

These inscriptions from the Trachonitis, most recently discovered, indicate that Agrippa II continued the policy of Herod the Great of creating military colonies on the border of the Lejā, perhaps after the Judaeen-Roman War. Their location suggests that maintaining order in that region remained an ongoing problem. But Agrippa II’s administrative policy, at least after the Judaeen-Roman War, differs from that of Herod in that his colonies were established with local Syrians (‘Arabs’) and foreigners (‘Greeks’) rather than recruits drawn from the Jewish population.

A1.7 The mētrokōmiai of Southern Syria

As Sartre (1999) has demonstrated, *mētrokōmiai* are a distinctive feature of South Syria in the Roman era and late antiquity, concentrated mainly in the north-west Ḥaurān. Most of the *mētrokōmiai* are in Trachonitis and Batanaea. Three are located on the western border of the Trachonitis, perhaps the most prominent at Phaena, which is called the ‘*mētrokōmia* of Trachon’ (IGLS 15.13) and the others at Saura (IGLS 15.104–105, dated to 326/27 CE) and Zorava-Ezra (IGLS 15.191 dated to 222–35 CE). Three more are in Batanaea: at Rayfa (IGLS 14.434, which mentions a *prōtokōmētēs* or ‘chief of the village’), Aqrabat (IGLS 14.518 of Tetrarchic date) and Neeila (IGLS 14.461 of similar date). There is also one at Borechath Sabaon on the southern edge of the Trachonitis (IGLS 16.28). The exceptions outside this circuit are at Dmeir, east of Damascus, and perhaps at Cyrrhus in North Syria in an emended fragmentary text (IGLS 1.153 = Sartre 1999, 197–203). All date between the reigns of Commodus (183–87 CE) and Constantine (320–26/27 CE).

Their origin and nature remain a mystery. Sartre considers them as purely ‘une creation officielle de Rome’ (Sartre 1999, 218). But more recently, Haensch (2014, 111) has sought an antecedent with Ptolemaic administration, where the *metropoleis* of Egyptian nomes served as administrative capitals with civic officials called *stratēgoi* as administrators of the district. He suggests the *mētrokōmiai* in Syria functioned in similar fashion with *stratēgoi* administering the villages in the surrounding *chora* of their respective urban centre. The Herodian kings allegedly preserved this Ptolemaic infrastructure with the *stratēgoi* of Agrippa II functioning as civil administrators like the Ptolemaic *stratēgoi* in Egypt. Haensch further argues that the Romans later cultivated this system, developing the Herodian administrative centres of Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis into urban centres called *mētrokōmiai*, with full rights as the administrative, commercial and military centres of their respective districts.

But a closer examination of this Ptolemaic parallel exposes numerous problems. The Ptolemaic administrative footprint is certainly reflected in the geographical terminology for the region. The typical Ptolemaic adjective ending of *-ites* or *-itis* for the Egyptian nomes and for regions under their rule appears with Auranitis and Trachonitis. This terminology is ‘commonly used in the Ptolemaic half of Syria, and [is] non-existent in the Seleucid half’ (Jones 1937, 241). This Ptolemaic toparchic system appears characteristic of Palestine in the early Roman era. In the 1st century CE, when it extended across Judaea (BJ 3.54–55; Pliny, HN 5.70), north into Samaria (1 Macc. 5.3) and Galilee, where Tiberias and Tarichaea were the capitals of toparchies (BJ 2.252). But there are distinctive differences in the administrative system in Syria and Phoenicia with Judaea, where the

administrative units were called hyparchies (*hyparchia*). Furthermore, the Ptolemies ‘carried out very little colonisation in their half of Syria’ (Jones 1937, 241). The world of Agrippa II’s Syrian territories was the domain of village, without any urban centres. It also appears the Ptolemaic *stratēgoi* in Syria were in charge of the military operations in the region as military commanders, *not* civil administrators or bureaucrats, that is, ‘provincial governors’ (Bagnall 1976, 11–24, 215–16). The only *stratēgoi* attested for Agrippa II appear at al-Ḥārrah in Batanaea (IGLS 14.48), Saura (Ṣur al-Lejā) in Trachonitis (IGLS 15.103), and Eitha-Hit in Auranitis (IGLS 16.615). Of these occurrences, only Saura is known as a *mētrokōmia*. The evidence also suggests the *stratēgoi* of Agrippa II functioned as military commanders or generals in his army, not civil administrators of ‘capital cities.’

The name and function of the *mētrokōmiai* remain puzzling. In some detail, Sartre’s analysis of the possible explanations for the title finds them all problematic (Sartre 1999, 212–18). In Trachonitis, the *mētrokōmiai* are all located on the western edge of the Lejā, which suggests a possible Herodian or Roman military purpose. But no similar evidence is attested for the locations in Batanaea and Auranitis, which are more centrally located on the main artery between Damascus and Gaulanitis (*contra* Mazzilli 2018, 20). Nor is there any basis for assuming *mētrokōmia* is an honorific title conferred when they obtained ‘urban’ status as cities (*contra* Jones 1931, 268). The evidence for Roman civic organisation in any of these non-hellenised villages is minimal and there is no epigraphic indication they served as administrative or commercial centres of their district. A possible hint as an explanation is found in a recently discovered inscription at al-Sanamayn (IGLS 14.525a) that mentions the administrator of a *saltus* in Batanaea and the presence of a procurator (IGLS 14.554–55; cf. Sartre 1999, 219–21). In late antiquity, a *saltus bataneos* is attested (Jones 1937, 290). This at least creates suspicion that other villages bearing the title may have imperial estates in their environs. It is certainly likely that Agrippa II carved out of his territory some royal domains, as did other client kings elsewhere. But it seems a stretch to explain all the *mētrokōmiai* in this way. A satisfactory explanation for the term *mētrokōmia* remains elusive given the present state of our knowledge. Whatever its real basis, this title seems unrelated to the establishment of the military colonies by Agrippa II.

A1.8 Safaitic inscriptions mentioning Agrippa II

There are references to a ‘King Agrippa’ in a number of texts in the Ancient North Arabian script known as Safaitic, a sub-group of the

South Semitic alphabetic family. The name ‘Safaitic’ is derived from the Syrian Šafā, where the first texts were recorded, but is an unfortunate misnomer, as the script was used across the vast black basalt desert of Syria and beyond primarily by pastoralists who migrated across southern Syria, western Iraq, northeast Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia. It is perhaps better to designate the script as Ancient North Arabian (Macdonald 2004). The language consists of some interrelated dialects that closely approach Arabic, but with its own peculiarities. The number of recorded texts now approaches 30,000, and they are being assembled by the OCIANA Project (Their sheer number allows for a grammatical analysis, in spite of their laconic nature; see Al-Jallad 2015). The largest concentration of texts is in the *Ḥarrat al-Shāmah*, the black basalt desert, stretching south and east from Jebel al-‘Arab in Syria into northeast Jordan and further east. Although most are graffiti, preserving mainly just names and genealogies, and recording pastoralist activities, they sometimes mention and correlate with historical events. They are generally dated between the 1st century BCE and 4th century CE, but they seem to have flourished in the 1st century CE. The eleven references to Agrippa in Safaitic texts support this impression.

The traditional interpretation of the Safaitic texts is that they were the product of external nomads based on their location in the *ḥarra* or eastern steppe (Macdonald 1993, 311–33, 329), but as the texts accumulated in recent decades, it became apparent that, in many instances, some sort of symbiotic relationship existed between the nomads and the sedentary population perhaps as a di-morphic society (Mazzilli 2018, 20–24, 56–60, 86–87; Macdonald 2014, 145–48; Graf 2003, 43–56). In a recent survey of the Jebel al-‘Arab, more than 400 texts were recorded from 29 villages scattered across the region, including one Nabataean-Safaitic bi-lingual text from Rushaidha (Zeinaddin 2000, 270–87, with no. 13 and Taf. 63). Although many of these texts were found in villages on the eastern border of Jebel al-‘Arab, this fits the pattern in Egypt where the eastern districts of some nomes facing the Eastern Desert were designated as *skenetai* or ‘tent districts’ (Verreth 2013, 525). In addition, among several texts found just east of Suweidā’ at Rijm Mushbik along the Wadi Sham, two Safaitic texts identify the named individuals as ‘Nabataean’ (Macdonald et al. 1996, 444–47, Site B. nos. 1–2, *h-nbty*; cf. OCIANA 0015592 = CSNS 661). Even on the remote eastern edge of the *ḥarra* in northeast Jordan, the Ruwayshid (H5) district, there is a cluster of Safaitic texts dated to the reign of Rabbel II (70–106 CE, including references to a ‘Nabataean raiding party’, ‘provisions received from the Nabataeans’, and an individual who identifies himself as from the ‘lineage of the Nabataeans’ (*dʿl nbt*), intermingled with two Nabataean

Aramaic texts (Al-Salameen et al. 2018, 66–76).

The best explanation for this intimacy with the sedentary realm is that the authors of these Safaitic texts were in contact with the Auranitis where the Nabataeans held sway. Several texts even appear to identify individuals as residents of villages in the region, if the expression the ‘lineage of Ṣalḥad’ (*dʿl ṣalḥad*) and ‘lineage of Nemat’ (*HCH* 82, *dʿl nmrt*) is interpreted correctly (Macdonald 2014, 147; 1993, 348–49). The village of Ṣalḥad is located c. 20 km east of Bostra in Auranitis, and one text is dated to ‘the year of the affliction of Ṣalḥad’ (King 1990b, 67 n. 18) and another dated to the reign of the Nabataean King Rabbel II (70–106 CE) attests the author ‘dwells at Ṣalḥad’ (Al-Salameen et al. 2018, 60 no. 9). The prominent tribe of ‘Ubaishat associated with the sanctuary of Baalshamin at Sī’ also appears to be attested in Safaitic texts (Graf 2003, 48–49; see *ʿbs2t* in *OCIANA*). Other texts indicate travel between the Balqa region of Jordan into the realm of Agrippa II in Syria. One individual indicates ‘He stayed at Abila and then returned from Gilead.’ (*OCIANA* 0005677 = *C* 2473; cf. *OCIANA* 0005872 = *C* 1868), evidently the ‘Abila’ in Agrippa II’s kingdom (cf. Macdonald 1993, 332–33; 2014, 147 n. 4). Another text indicates the author ‘hastened from Gilead to Tadmor’ (King 1990b, 67 n. 17, 75 pl. Ia = *KR* 1), evidently crossing the Auranitis and Agrippa II’s kingdom from northern Jordan en route to Palmyra. These Safaitic texts indicate familiarity with the regions administered by Agrippa II.

The problem is that most of the Safaitic texts mentioning Agrippa are vague and opaque. In the majority of instances, it is unclear whether they refer to Agrippa I or Agrippa II, and the historical events they refer to are difficult to identify. Of the eleven texts mentioning ‘Agrippa’, the only text that unambiguously refers to Agrippa II is one specifically dated to ‘the 18th year of King Agrippa’ from the northern environs of Nemara (al-Namarāh, Nimreh) on the western edge of the ḥarra, by someone of the lineage of *fšmn* (*OCIANA* 0029371 = *I.H* 76 = *LP* 1064–1065 as re-read by Zeinaddin 2014, 151–52). The era is presumably that which began in 60/61 CE, which yields a date of 77/78 CE. Members of the *fšmn* lineage are known in texts from the area of Suweidā’ in Jebel al-ʿArab and the Mafraq district in north-eastern Jordan. In addition, there are a cluster of five texts dated to ‘the year that Agrippa died’ from aṣ-Ṣafāwi (formerly H4), 6 km from Wadi Umm Kinyṣri in Jordan (*OCIANA* 0032317 = *HSNS* 2; *OCIANA* 0032319 = *HSNS* 4; *OCIANA* 0032320 = *HSNS* 1; *OCIANA* 0032322 = *HSNS* 6; *OCIANA* 0032323 = *HSNS* 7). They find a counterpart 21 km east of Rushayda (H5) in north-eastern Jordan (*OCIANA* 0035833 = *SESP.U* 8). But the circumstances that may have provoked this unusual outburst of texts attesting Agrippa’s death remain obscure. If

these texts refer to Agrippa II, they must date to 94 CE or shortly after. But it is also possible that they refer to Agrippa I. The other texts that mention 'Agrippa' are equally non-descript, lacking any historical context or specifics, such as a reference merely to '*the year the King Agrippa son of Herod*' (OCIANA 0032321 = HSNS 5) and the 'the year that Agrippa retained power' (OCIANA 0032319 = HSNS 4), leaving which Agrippa is meant and the date unknown.

In contrast, several other texts offer tantalising historical details for which regrettably only conjecture can attempt to illuminate. A text from the region of Nemara is dated to 'the year King Agrippa laid siege to the city' (*h-mdnt*) (OCIANA 0026302 = HN 91). In this instance, it is perhaps best to render *mdnt* as 'region' (as in other Safaitic texts) rather than as 'city' or 'province', that is, 'Syria' (*pace* OCIANA). The attempt to relate the rebellion concerned to the Judaeo-Roman War (as in Macdonald 2014, 152–53) is unnecessary speculation as there are ample other local situations to account for the campaign. The string of military colonies on the edge of the Lejā and the evidence of Agrippa II's military personnel in Auranitis (Section A1.2) signals internal conflict in the area, so the attack in the text may refer to an attempt to pacify the region. Several other texts from the *ḥarra* in Jordan indicate that certain individuals rebelled against King Agrippa with petitions to 'break the chains' (OCIANA 0021651, 0021667 = KRS 1023, 1039). The implication is that the individuals suffered some punitive action by the king. The speculation that these rebels participated in the Jewish Revolt against Agrippa II's army in Galilee and were sold into slavery (BJ 3.540–41) has been proposed (Macdonald 1995, 289–91; King 1990b, 62 n. 24). The reactions to that rebellion in Trachonitis must surely have been mixed. During the War, some Trachonite natives attacked the Babylonian colony in Batanaea (V 54). Although the native Syrian reaction to the conflict is relatively unknown, many of the Auranitis settlers, including the pastoralists who wrote in the Safaitic script, who were under Nabataean rule, may have sided with the Nabataean king and the Roman cause (BJ 3.68). The rebels in the border areas may have chosen simply to oppose Agrippa II for some unmentioned reason.

Finally, there is a text from Ruwayshid (formerly H4) in the basalt desert of northeast Jordan referring to 'the year the people of the Ḥauran complained to Caesar about Philip(us)' (OCIANA 0022620 = KRS 1991). It has been proposed that the 'Philip' referred to in this text is the Babylonian commander Philip son of Jacimus mentioned by Josephus (V 407–408) and therefore dates to the reign of Agrippa II (Macdonald 2014, 149; 1995, 289). The reference to 'Caesar' only suggests Roman authority in the region, so it is possible that the complaint was made to a Roman governor or commander, not the

emperor. At the outbreak of the Judaeen-Roman War, it is known that a complaint was made about the conduct of Philip the commander (*stratopedarchēs*) to the general Vespasian and Agrippa in Tyre concerning his evacuation of the royal palace of Jerusalem when it came under siege. But the proposal that Philip son of Jacimus is the subject of this Safaitic text encounters multiple problems. He is a ‘puzzling’ figure complicated by contradictions and inconsistencies in Josephus’ accounts in *BJ* and *V* (pp. 10–11, 74 above; cf. Price 1991, 79–80, 94). Secondly, the incident involves Philip’s conduct in Jerusalem, which ostensibly sparked a complaint from Roman citizens in Judaea (*BJ* 2.556), but this affair would not elicit such a response from pro-Nabataean Arab settlers in the Ḥaurān. The Philip in the Safaitic text must surely be Philip the Tetrarch, who ruled over Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis between 4 BCE and 34 CE (cf. *OCIANA* 0030127 = *Ms* 44; Macdonald 2014, 151). A Nabataean inscription of Philip the Tetrarch from Sī’ dated to the reign of Philip in 29/30 CE associates him with the population in the Ḥaurān (*PAES* 4A.101 = *RES* 2117; Offord 1919, 83). The basis of the complaint must be some unknown episode in his obscure reign.

A more compelling explanation perhaps for the references to Agrippa’s attack in Auranitis and the rebellion and punishment of the local population is the social dynamics of Herodian administration and possible financial oppression of the local population. These factors appear to be the issues in the earlier conflict between Herod the Great and the Arabs in Trachonitis and Auranitis (Graf 2016, 138–45; Pastor 1997, 105–107). At the time of Herod’s death in 4 BCE, the taxation proscribed for Philip the Tetrarch for Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis, including the old domain of Zenodorus, was just 100 talents, far less than the 400 talents received by Archelaus from Samaria, Judaea and Idumaea, and the 200 talents received by Antipas from Galilee and Peraea (*BJ* 2.94–98; *AJ* 17.318–20). This relatively small sum may simply reflect the relative sparseness and poverty of the population in these north-eastern territories. Nonetheless, these financial obligations for the residents in Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis stood in contrast to the local Babylonian military colony in Batanaea, which enjoyed a ‘land free of taxes and tribute’ that also was extended to other Jews who settled in the region during Herod’s lifetime (*AJ* 17.25–27). This policy must have been resented by the adjacent poor villagers in the Lejā and neighbouring Auranitis. According to Josephus, Philip the Tetrarch (4 BCE–34 CE) changed this policy, and subjected the Batanaea colonists to taxation, and this was even increased by Agrippa I and Agrippa II who ‘ground them down’ further with heavier taxation, before the Romans later encumbered them with even heavier tribute (*AJ* 17.28). For the

inhabitants of Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis, Agrippa II's financial measures may have been regarded as equally oppressive. The details are lacking, but a possible clue regarding his relations with the Auranitis pastoralists may be Herod's previous policy of renting grazing lands to them (*AJ* 16.291), which they may have considered their ancestral lands. If Agrippa II continued this policy, it would have been an irritant to his relations with this nomadic population, especially with the added imposition on them of tribute. Nevertheless, in other respects Agrippa II's rule over the native Syrian population appears to have been quite accommodating, if his incorporation of local Syrians into his administration and military is any index of his outlook towards his subjects.



<i>Date, CE</i>	<i>Year-date, based on era of 60/61 CE (✓)</i>	<i>Year-date, based on era of 49 CE (*)</i>	<i>Coins</i>	<i>Lapidary inscriptions</i>	<i>Lead weights</i>
60/61	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
65/66	6		☒		
	7				
	8				
	9				
70/71	10			☒(?)	
	11				
	12				
	13				
	14		✓		
75/76	15	26	✓*		
	16	27	*	☒	
	17	28			
	18	29	✓*	✓	
	19	30	✓*		
	20			✓	
80/81	21				
	22			✓	✓
	23				✓
	24		✓		
85/86	25		✓		
	26		✓		
	27				
	28			✓	
	29		✓		
	30				
90/91	31				
	32			☒	
	33				
	34		✓		
95/96	35		✓		
	36				

When only one year-date is given, it is denoted in the table by the symbol ✓, and listed according to Agrippa's era beginning in 60/61 CE (or possibly 49 CE for Agrippa II's coins bearing Greek inscriptions and dates from years 26–30 CE, indicated by *). The ☒ symbol denotes a year-date which is given on a coin or in an inscription in terms of the two principal eras set five years apart, that is, 55/56 and 60/61 CE, so that the date is specified unambiguously.









Year	<i>RPC</i> no.	weight	<i>RPC</i> no.	weight	<i>RPC</i> no.	weight	<i>RPC</i> no.	weight	<i>RPC</i> no.	weight	<i>RPC</i> no.	weight					
<i>RPC</i> 1:																	
Updated*			4990	3.18	(1)		4989	6.01	(6)		4988	13.51	(2)				
6-11			4991	2.90	(2)												
			4992	2.06	(5)												
<i>RPC</i> 2:																	
14							2250	6.57	(4)		2246	12.76	(1)	2243	12.81	(5)	
							2251	6.31	(6)		2247	12.30	(1)	2246	14.0	(6)	
											2248	12.54	(10)	2245	16.83	(5)	
											2249	11.22	(3)				
														2252	12.99	(3)	
15							2255	6.01	(4)								
15 ¹																	
18						2242	5.39	(4)									
						2256	5.44	(2)			2254	11.77	(3)				
											2255	11.25	(3)				
19	2261	1.73	(2)	2260	3.75	(5)								2257	12.13	(5)	
							2258	7.30	(2)								
							2259	6.90	(2)								
24							2263	6.56	(4)		2262	9.96	(8)				
25	2268	1.73	(2)	2267	2.91	(6)	2264	4.96	(2)		2263	9.85	(1)				
											2266	10.03	(4)				
26						2271	4.73	(9)	2273	6.80	(7)	2276	12.84	(6)	2273	12.81	(2)
						2272	4.93	(8)	2279	6.22	(11)	2270	9.11	(6)	2274	16.67	(5)
						2281	5.42	(1)	2280	6.72	(1)				2275	6.79	(8)
27											2285	8.86	(3)		2283	5.73	(7)
29			2287	3.79	(5)	2286	5.31	(5)							2288	12.15	(5)
											2292	7.39	(5)		2290	13.39	(2)
															2291	12.78	(7)
30															2293	4.05	(2)
															2294	1.73	(3)
34	2295	1.75	(7)														
35				2296	3.02	(8)					2297	11.06	(3)	2296	17.14	(8)	

Issues of Agrippa II - Neronian

Size range, mm	13-16	18	23
Total number	10	6	5
Ave. weight, g	2.56	6.01	13.51

Issues of Agrippa II - Flavian

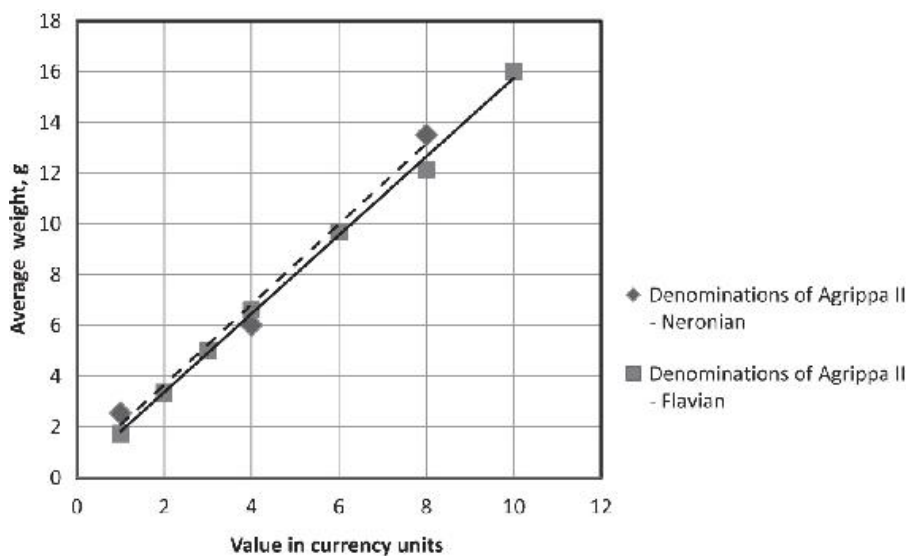
Size range, mm	11-12	14-16	17-19	17-22	21-27	21-27	24-30
Total number	11	27	50	51	25	48	58
Ave. weight, g	1.74	3.36	5.01	6.61	9.68	12.15	16.01
Standard deviation, mm	0.01	0.39	0.22	0.44	0.43	0.61	0.94
Denomination, currency units	1	2	3	4	6	8	10
Size range, mm of Seleucid coins	12-14	15-21		17-26		22-29	
Weight range of Seleucid coins, g	1.5-3.0	3.0-3.5		5.5-9.3		11.0-24.3	

Issues of Agrippa II - Neronian

Denomination, units	1	2	3	4	6	8	10
Average coin weight, g		2.36			6.01		13.51
Standard deviation, g		0.51					
Deviation of coin weight from the trend-line, g		0.46			0.50		0.28

Issues of Agrippa II - Flavian

Denomination, units	1	2	3	4	6	8	10
Average coin weight, g	1.74	3.36	5.01	6.61	9.68	12.15	16.01
Standard deviation, g	0.01	0.39	0.22	0.44	0.43	0.61	0.94
Deviation of coin weight from the trend-line, g	0.29	0.02	0.09	0.14	0.12	0.50	0.26



Appendix 2. The coinage of Agrippa II

In the course of his reign, Agrippa II produced 64 different coin issues – almost equalling the combined total of all the previous Herodian kings and tetrarchs.⁴⁵⁹ Like all his predecessors, his entire coinage was produced exclusively in copper alloys.

Most of Agrippa’s coins bear profile portraits of Roman emperor (Nero, Vespasian, Titus and Domitian) and in the case of Vespasian’s sons, also prior to becoming emperors (which also pertained to Roman coinage struck under Vespasian), but perhaps surprisingly none include the portrait of Agrippa himself.⁴⁶⁰ It is believed that the majority of Agrippa II’s coins were struck in his capital Caesarea Philippi (Paneas),⁴⁶¹ where most of the inhabitants were gentile and congenial to images of humans and pagan deities.

A2.1 Eras of Agrippa II

All coins issued in the name of Agrippa, bar one series issued under Nero, carry a date to an era of Agrippa. Usually a single year date is given, but on a pair of coins and two, or possibly three, inscriptions a pair of year dates are mentioned, all five years apart. What is more, these dates are spaced fairly evenly through his reign; see [Table A2.1](#). Accordingly, these must have been Agrippa’s principal eras.⁴⁶²

Table A2.1 Occurrences of double date eras for Agrippa II

<i>Modern era code</i>	<i>Inscription</i>
TRAC 10105	4991, 4992 = <i>TJC</i> , nos. 132, 133, 133a-b; see Section A2.2
RPC 1.158	5115 (Aliphon 2009, 135 reading)
SEG 7.970	7 = <i>SEG</i> 7.970; see Section A1.5.3b
OGIS 426	59 = <i>OGIS</i> 426; see Section A1.4.4

The two eras have been identified by Kokkinos as beginning in 55/56 and 60/61 CE, in close accord with those given in *RPC* 2.1.⁴⁶³ While an era of 60/61 CE is also more compatible with the iconography and imperial titulature on most of Agrippa’s coins dated to a single era than an earlier one, we are left with the problem that many of those issued with Greek inscriptions between years 26 and 30 feature Vespasian and Titus posthumously on their obverse, without referring to those emperors as ‘Divi’ (i.e. as deceased and apotheosized) as we would expect.⁴⁶⁴

Kushnir-Stein, among others, was troubled by what she calls these ‘anachronistic’ issues displaying heads of Vespasian or Titus with their normal titulatures, as though they were still reigning, despite what is a later date on the coins if the era of 60/61 CE applies to them. Burnett has underlined the fact that such a phenomenon is

‘unexplained and unparalleled’ in Roman coinage.⁴⁶⁵ With the aim of resolving this anomaly, Kushnir-Stein proposed a revised chronological framework, involving three eras for Agrippa II, beginning in 49, 54 and 60 CE, respectively, the era of 49 CE applying to the ‘anachronistic’ coins of years 26 to 30 CE.⁴⁶⁶ She acknowledged that the era of 60/61 provides the best fit for the coin types up to and including ‘year 25’.⁴⁶⁷

An era of 49 CE for the coins with Greek inscriptions marked years 26–30 provides a neat solution for the coins bearing the head of Vespasian as reigning emperor (*RPC* 2, nos. 2273–75, 2282, 2283, 2288 = *TJC*, nos. 158, 158a–c, 159, 166, 167, 167a–c, 172; see [Figure A2.1](#)) and has the additional merit of being Agrippa’s true regnal era.⁴⁶⁸ However, this ‘remedy’ does not work for those coins inscribed with the same years and displaying the head of Titus, naming him as reigning emperor, too (*RPC* 2, nos. 2276, 2277, 2285, 2290, 2291, 2293, 2294 = *TJC*, nos. 160, 160a–c, 169, 169a, 173, 173a–b, 176, 176a, 177; see [Figure A2.2](#)). Then again, not all the coins of Agrippa belonging to the group categorised as ‘anachronistic’ suit an era of 49 CE. There is a large bronze of the *Tyche* type from year 29, where Domitian is shown on the obverse together with his imperial titles, including ‘Germanicus’ (*RPC* 2, no. 2289 = *TJC*, no. 174). This coin is completely out of kilter with an era of 49 CE, demanded by Kushnir-Stein’s scheme, which would assign it inappropriately to 77/78 CE. An era of 60/61 CE, though, is appropriate for this coin, placing it firmly in the middle of Domitian’s reign.⁴⁶⁹ Her revised scheme implies that for the years 74/75 CE to 78/79 CE, the eras of 49 CE and 60/61 CE were employed on Agrippa’s coins concurrently but independently and probably at the same mint, as shown in [Table A2.2](#), which is hardly credible.⁴⁷⁰ Besides, three parallel eras for Agrippa are nowhere directly attested, whether in texts, on coins or inscriptions.

[Figure A2.1](#) Agrippa II, year 26. Æ 25 mm, 15.78 g. Laureate head of Vespasian; ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑ ΟΥΕ[ΣΙΑ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΙ]ΒΑΚΤΩ (‘Emperor Vespasian, Caesar Augustus’) / Tyche wearing a *kalathos*, standing and holding two corn-ears and cornucopia ΕΤΟΥ Κς ΒΑ [Α]ΓΡΙΠΠΙΑ (‘Year 26, King Agrippa’). *RPC* 2, no. 2274 = *TJC*, no. 158b. CNG Electronic Auction 335 (24 Sept. 2014), lot 361. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

[Figure A2.2](#) Agrippa II, year 26. Æ 25 mm, 11.24 g. Laureate head of Titus; ΑΥΤΟΚΡ ΤΙΤΟΚ ΚΑΙΣΑΡΕΒΑΚ (‘Emperor Titus Caesar Augustus’) / Victory holding a wreath in her right hand and palm branch over her left shoulder; ΕΤΟ [Κς ΒΑ Α]ΓΡΙΠΠΙΑ

(‘Year 26 of King Agrippa’) across the field, star to upper right.. *RPC* 2, no. 2277 = *TJC*, no. 160a. CNG Triton XV Auction (03 Jan. 2012), lot 1437. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

Table A2.2 Number of years of King Agrippa II shown on coins, lapidary inscriptions and lead weights

A2.2 Agrippa II’s coinage under Nero

Only a few of Agrippa’s coins were struck under Nero, including an issue of three denominations (*RPC* 1 nos. 4988–90 = *TJC* nos. 129–31) and another of two (*RPC* 1 nos. 4991–92 = *TJC* nos. 132–33). All three coins in the first series are undated, being the only exception in this respect. They are a uniform series, sharing the same design, with Nero’s head on the obverse, accompanied by the simple inscription ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΣ (‘Nero, Caesar Augustus’) on the obverse and a wreath surrounding the five-line inscription ΕΠΙ / ΒΑCΙΑΕ / ΑΓΡΙΠΠΗ / ΝΕΡΩ / ΝΙΕ (‘in the time of King Agrippa, Neronias’) on the reverse; [Figure A2.3](#). Accordingly, it is widely believed that this issue was produced to commemorate Agrippa’s re-founding of Caesarea Philippi (Paneas) as Neronias. The distinctive coiffure in this representation of Nero, with row of curls above his forehead which this emperor adopted in 64 CE, narrows their date to between 64 and 68 CE, the year of Nero’s death.⁴⁷¹

The second series of Agrippa’s coins struck during the reign of Nero carry the double dating ΕΤΟΥC ΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΚΑΙ (ς) (‘year 11 and [year] 6’), the only issues to do so; [Figures A2.4](#) and [A2.5](#). One of them (*RPC* 1, no. 4991 = *TJC*, no. 132) has the inscription ΚΑΙCΑΡΙΑ ΘΗ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΡΩΝΙΑΔΙ (‘of Caesarea which is also Neronias’, i.e. Caesarea Philippi [Paneas]) on its obverse. The ‘year 6’ has to be of the era of 60/61 CE, so these coins are dated to 65/66 CE. The legend on the other obverse (*RPC* 1, no. 4992 = *TJC*, no. 133) is ΒΑCΙΑΕΟC ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΟΥ (‘of King Marcus Agrippa’), which supplies the monarch’s *praenomen*. The associated motif is a hand clutching ears of corn and poppies, attributes of Demeter/Ceres as the goddess of agricultural fecundity. It is rather similar to the motif on a coin issue of Agrippa II’s great uncle, the tetrarch Philip (4–34 CE), commemorating the passing of the Julio-Claudian matriarch, Livia (*RPC* 1, no. 4949 = *TJC*, no. 107 and *RPC*, no. S-4952A = *TJC*, no. 110).

Figure A2.3 Agrippa II, 64–68 CE. Æ 23 mm, 13.10 g. Laureate head of Nero; *lituus* to the right; ΝΕΡΩΝ ΚΑΙΣΑΡ ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ (‘Nero

Caesar Augustus') / Wreath encompassing an inscription in five lines: ΕΠΙ ΒΑCΙΑΕ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙ ΝΕΡΩΝΙΕ ('In the time of King Agrippa, Neronias'). *RPC* 1, no. 4988 = *TJC*, no. 129. Private collection, with permission.

Figure A2.4 Agrippa II, dated by two eras to 65/66 CE. Æ 14.5 mm, c. 3 g. Bust of Tyche with a mural crown right; ΚΑCΑΡΙΑ ΘΗ ΚΑΙ ΝΕΡΩΝΙΑΔΙ ('Caesarea, which is also Neronias') / Caduceus within crossed cornucopias; ΒΑC [ΑΓΡ] ΕΤΟΥ[C ΑΙ ΤΟΥ]Υ ΚΑΙ ('King Agrippa, year 11 also 6') around. *RPC* 1, no. 4991 = *TJC*, no. 132. Archaeological Center Auction 60 (26 Apr. 2016), lot 18; courtesy of Archeological Center, Yafo.

Figure A2.5 Agrippa II, dated by two eras to 65/66 CE. Æ 13 mm, 1.61 g. Hand holding ears of grain and poppies; ΒΑCΙΑΙΕΩC ΜΑΡΚΟΥ ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΟΥ ('Of King Marcus Agrippa') / Inscription within a knotted diadem; ΕΤΟΥC ΑΙ ΤΟΥ ('Year 11 [and] 6'). *RPC* 1, no. 4992 = *TJC*, no. 133b. Heritage Signature Auction 3003 (8–9 Mar. 2012), lot 20157. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, Inc.

There are a further pair coins that have generally been assigned to Agrippa II's coinage under Nero, and to a mint in his capital, Caesarea Philippi (Paneas), on the basis of their provenance (*RPC* 1.1, pp. 669–70). These are:

1. Obverse: Agrippina the Younger (Nero's mother) shown seated and holding a branch (or ears of grain) and a cornucopia, with the inscription ΑΓΡΙΠΠΙΝΑ ΑΥΓ. Reverse: the standing figure of Nero's first wife Octavia is shown veiled and standing: her right hand is extended, holding a *patera* over lighted altar, with the inscription ΟCΤΑΒΙΑ ΑΥΓΒCΤΙ (*RPC* 1, no. 4845 = *TJC*, no. 353); [Figure A2.6](#).
2. Obverse: a distyle Ionic temple on a podium with the seated figure of Poppaea Sabina within, holding a cornucopia, with the inscription ΔΙΒΑ ΠΟΠΠΑΕΑ. Reverse: round hexastyle temple, within which the figure of Claudia, Nero's deceased daughter, is shown standing, holding a long sceptre and possibly a cornucopia. The accompanying inscription reads ΔΙΒΑ ΚΛΑΥΔ ΝΕΡ F (*RPC* 1, no. 4846 = *TJC*, no. 354); [Figure A2.7](#).

These two coins, which are of the same denomination, are unusual on several counts. Neither bears the head or inscribed with the name of a

ruler, either Nero or Agrippa II. Each side features a female member of Nero's family, namely his mother (Agrippina the Younger) and his first wife (Octavia) on one coin, and his second wife (Poppaea) and her daughter (Claudia) on the other. Three of the images represent the family member as deified, while Octavia is shown in the act of performing a sacrifice. The coins were issued sequentially, because Nero ordered the execution of his mother in 59 CE and Poppaea succeeded Octavia as Nero's consort in 62 CE. Both coins carry inscriptions in Latin, whereas all other coins issued by Agrippa prior to the Flavian emperors have Greek inscriptions. For that reason, in particular, there is a reluctance in *RPC* to assign these coins to Agrippa II (*RPC* 1.1, pp. 669–70, 685).

Figure A2.6 Agrippa II (?) under Nero, c. 54–59 CE. Æ 20 mm, 7.08 g. Agrippina the Younger, seated, in the guise of Ceres, holding an ear of grain in one hand and a cornucopia in the other; AGRIPPIN AVG ('Agrippina Augusta') / Octavia (Nero's first wife) veiled, standing with a *patera* in her right hand, over a lighted altar; OCTAVIA AVG ('Octavia Augusta'). *RPC* 1, no. 4845 = *TJC*, no. 353. Numismatik Lanz Auction 94 (22 Nov. 1999), lot 236. Courtesy of Numismatik Lanz, München.

Figure A2.7 Agrippa II (?) under Nero, c. 66–68 CE. Æ 20 mm, 5.94 g. Distyle temple, female figure seated within, holding a cornucopia; DIVA POPPAEA AV[G] ('Deified Poppaea Augusta') / Round hexastyle temple, female figure standing within, holding a cornucopia; DIVA CLAUD NER F ('Deified Claudia, daughter of Nero'). *RPC* 1, no. 4846 = *TJC*, no. 354. Private collection, with permission.

This is the only coin issued with the name of Claudia, Nero's daughter (died in 63 CE), who was deified along with Poppaea (died in 65 CE), on their respective deaths.

Some light on these two issues may be shed by an earlier series of three coins bearing Latin inscriptions that were issued under Claudius (*RPC* 1, nos. 4842–44 = *TJC*, nos. 350–52). Again, on the basis of provenance, they have been assigned to a mint in Caesarea Philippi. In this series, the reigning Roman emperor is made explicit, with the obverse type of the two largest denominations featuring the laureate head of Claudius together with his name and titulature. The reverses of the three coins are devoted to three children of the emperor, who are named: Antonia, Britannicus, Octavia (*RPC* 1, no. 4842 = *TJC*, no. 350) and Britannicus (*RPC* 1, nos. 4843–44 = *TJC*, nos. 351–52). Their style, use of Latin inscriptions and focus on members of the

imperial family possibly link these coins to the later pair of coins featuring the female members of Nero's immediate family.

Although the Claudian coins with Latin inscriptions are undated, they provide sufficient clues, including an absence of any reference to the young Nero or his mother, Agrippina the Younger, to be able to date them to the late 40s, but prior to 49 CE, when Claudius married Agrippina (*RPC* 1.1, p. 669). Therefore, these coins predate Agrippa's accession to Philip the Tetrarch's kingdom and acquisition of the mint at Caesarea Philippi in 53 CE, ruling out Agrippa's involvement in these issues. The lack of a mention of an issuing authority on the coins featuring female members of Nero's family may indicate that they were commemorative tokens rather than coins. But then what might have been the event they were intended to celebrate? Might they have been issued as donatives? We simply do not know.

The authors of *RPC* 1 have put forward a proposal regarding the genesis of the Julio-Claudian coins with Latin inscriptions, but without providing the reason for their being issued (*RPC* 1.1, p. 670). They note that there are two coins that were struck for Claudius, most likely in Caesarea Maritima, bearing the head of the emperor on the obverse and displaying maritime symbols – a rudder and an anchor, respectively, as well as Latin inscriptions (*RPC* 1, nos. 4847–48 = *TJC* 1, nos. 355–56). Moreover, the coin from Caesarea Philippi issued under Nero, showing the seated Agrippina, closely replicates an image on two of coins from Caesarea Maritima,⁴⁷² one struck under Claudius (*RPC* 1, no. 4859 = *TJC*, no. 358) and the other under Nero (*RPC* 1, no. 4860 = *TJC*, no. 359). Just as Agrippa I minted coins in Caesarea Maritima and Caesarea Philippi to complement his single issue in Jerusalem,⁴⁷³ it follows that either Tiberius Julius Alexander (46/47–c. 48 CE) or Ventidius Cumanus (48/49–c. 52 CE), neither of whom had coins struck in Jerusalem, may have been responsible for the minting of the coins with Latin inscriptions and which feature senior members of the imperial household, at the two Caesareas, during the reign of Claudius.

Perhaps the two coins with Latin inscriptions issued at Caesarea Philippi (Neronias) in Nero's reign, when the city was ruled by Agrippa II, represented continuity for the same Roman-trained die engraver(s) at the local mint.⁴⁷⁴ These issues would have been sanctioned by Agrippa, although their designs may well have been directed from Caesarea Maritima, where the initiative for choosing the motifs would have been taken by the Roman authorities, especially as they differ substantially from the fairly narrow repertoire of motifs characterising the great majority of Agrippa II's coins. Burnett sees the iconography of the two coins in question as evidence of an Imperial Cult functioning in Agrippa's kingdom.⁴⁷⁵ More plausibly, the double-

dated coin of Agrippa featuring a hand clasping ears of wheat and poppies (RPC 1, no. 4992 = *TJC*, no. 133), which is readily recognisable as a reference to Demeter/Ceres, may indicate that a cult to the empress Livia, who was deified as that fertility goddess, operated in Caesarea Philippi (Paneas) under the king's patronage.⁴⁷⁶ The representation of Agrippina the Younger as Ceres on one of the coins from Agrippa's capital is relevant in this regard.

Because there remains a shadow over Agrippa's connection with this pair of coins may, they have been omitted from the metrological analysis of his coinage that is presented in [Section A2.4](#).

A2.3 Agrippa II's coinage under the Flavians

The bulk of Agrippa II's coins postdate the Jewish Revolt and were issued under the Flavian emperors (Vespasian and his sons, Titus and Domitian). The last coins in the king's name were issued in year 35 (94/95 CE).

The majority of the designs on the coins of Agrippa struck under the Flavian emperors reflect contemporaneous Roman imperial preferences. As Kropp rather aptly remarks, 'Agrippa almost 'disappears' behind Flavian propaganda', noting also that, whereas the legends on the obverse 'generally provide a full set of imperial titles', Agrippa's kingship is generally reduced merely to the abbreviation BA.⁴⁷⁷

The two most popular motifs reproduced on Agrippa's coins are personifications of Victory and (good) Fortune (Tyche), both referring to the successful outcome for Rome of the Jewish War. Between them, they account for 26 or almost half of the reverse types on Agrippa's coins struck under the Flavian emperors. These personifications are Greek in origin, as *Nikē* and *Agathē Tychē*, respectively.⁴⁷⁸

The personification of Tyche (Fortuna) depicted has a distinctly Roman accent, being assimilated with the goddess Ceres. In this form, the figure of Fortuna bearing a cornucopia, wears a *polos* or *modius* on her head and clutches ears of grain a regular attribute of Ceres⁴⁷⁹; see [Figure A2.1](#).

The winged Victory is presented in two different versions. In one of them, this figure is represented in a standing position, draped and holding out a wreath in her right hand while bearing a palm branch over her left shoulder (see [Figure A2.2](#)). In the other, she is shown upright, inscribing a shield, which rests on one knee⁴⁸⁰; see [Figure A2.8](#). The iconography of these coin types is informative in cultural terms, as is often the case. While the coin types of Herod the Great, a century earlier were chosen from the standard Hellenistic repertoire,⁴⁸¹ Agrippa I turned to Roman themes and designs for

several of his coins.⁴⁸² His son continued the drive towards Romanisation, which we see reflected in the two chosen Victory types. The popular Roman motif of a Victory holding a palm branch and wreath appears on coins of Sicily and Rome, beginning in the 3rd century BCE (*CNS* 3, Katane no. 18; *RRC*, no. 22/1). The second Victory type, in which the figure inscribing a shield supported on her right knee derives from a late Classical Greek type of Aphrodite with one foot raised on a helmet and glancing at her reflection in the shield of Ares, which she holds.⁴⁸³ This version of Aphrodite gained considerable popularity in Italy and is often referred to as the Capua or Brescia type, named after statues from those respective Roman towns, the prototype for which has been attributed to the famous Greek sculptor, Scopas.⁴⁸⁴ This type, in the form reproduced on Agrippa's coins, surfaces during the reign of Nero as a winged Victory inscribing a shield on a hemidrachm of Caesarea-Mazaca, Cappadocia.⁴⁸⁵

Figure A2.8 Agrippa II, year 26. Æ 22 mm, 6.15 g. Laureate head of Domitian; ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟC ΚΑΙCΑΡ ('Domitian Caesar') / Victory standing with her left foot on a helmet and inscribing a shield resting on her left knee; ΕΤΟ Κς ΒΑ ΑΓΡΗΠΠΙΑ ('Year 26 of King Agrippa'). *RPC* 2, no. 2280 var. = *TJC*, no. 165b var. (no crescent). CNG Auction 75 (23 May 2007), lot 862. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

The principal denominations of the Flavian issues of Agrippa II tend to correlate with these specific motifs. Thus, the image of Tyche is associated with a large denomination weighing 15–17 gm (26–30 mm diameter); that of a standing Victory holding a wreath with a denomination 11–12 gm (22–26 mm); and that of a Victory inscribing a shield with a denomination 5–7 gm (19–22 mm) (*RPC* 2.1, p. 309; Kushnir-Stein 2002b, 123). There are two smaller denominations with other obverse types and a larger one in year 27, weighing about 26 gm with a diameter of 31–35 mm, which bears a representation of Tyche. There are coins of the same type with essentially the same weight, but different diameters, which may simply represent different production batches of the same denomination (coins of year 14: *RPC* 2, nos. 2243–44 = *TJC*, nos. 135–36 [with Tyche]; *RPC* 2, nos. 2250–51 = *TJC*, nos. 139 and 139a–c [with Victory inscribing a shield]). There are also representations of Moneta and Pan on Agrippa's coins, although the particularly large piece portraying Pan is likely to be a special medallion, rather than a coin intended for circulation. The motifs across Agrippa's Flavian series of coins, other than the two largest pieces, considered to be medallions, are tabulated in *RPC* 2.1,

Other motifs that appear on Agrippa's coins include:

- A palm branch, which is a Graeco-Roman victory symbol (*RPC* 2, no. 2242 = *TJC*, no. 134). The relevant coin is dated 'year 15', that is, 74/75 CE or 69/70 CE.
- A galley, a popular maritime symbol (*RPC* 2, no. 2258 = *TJC*, no. 146), on a pair of coins dated 'year 19', which must be 78/79 rather than 73/74 because the head of Titus is shown on the obverse and he is described as 'Sebastos', that is, Augustus.
- An inverted anchor on a coin dated 'year 19' (*RPC* 2, no. 2261 = *TJC*, no. 149). The inverted anchor had been adopted as the symbol of Seleucid kings and afterwards taken up by monarchs in the Greek east to assert their claims to possess legitimate royal title.⁴⁸⁶
- A palm tree with clusters of dates on a coin dated to year 25 (*RPC* 2, no. 2267 = *TJC*, no. 156). This year must correspond to 84/85 CE and not 79/80 CE, because the titles of Domitian on this coin include 'Germanicus', which he only adopted as an emperor towards the end of 83 CE. The date palm was employed on Roman coins as a symbol of Judaea but was a popular type on the bronze coins of Tyre.
- A single cornucopia, a Graeco-Roman symbol of abundance and fecundity, on a coin dated 'year 25' (*RPC* 2, no. 2268 = *TJC*, no. 157).
- A pair of crossed cornucopias on a coin dated 'year 27' (*RPC* 2, no. 2287 = *TJC*, no. 171). This motif enjoyed popularity on Judaeian coins from the Hasmonaean period onwards.

The Greek inscriptions on the reverses of all the Agrippa coins of Flavian date follow the formula ETOYC xx BACIAEWC AΓPIΠΠA ('year xx, King Agrippa'), or similar. An issue which was struck in Tiberias dated to year 15 of one of Agrippa's eras, adds the abbreviation NIK[H TOY] CEB[ACTOY] ('victory of Augustus') to this formula (*RPC* 2, no. 2242 = *TJC*, no. 134). As the authors of *RPC* 2.1 (p. 309) point out, this abbreviation corresponds to the Latin VIC[TORIA] AVG[VSTI], which appears as a legend on coins struck in Rome in 70–72 CE (*RIC* 2.1², Vesp. nos. 14, 47–48, 361, 367). This legend refers to the Roman victory over Judaea and proclaims Agrippa II's commemoration of it.⁴⁸⁷ The motif around which the legend is set is a palm branch, that ubiquitous symbol of victory.⁴⁸⁸

While most of Agrippa's coins issued under the Flavian emperors bear Greek inscriptions, Latin legends appear on a group of coins struck under Domitian. Altogether, these coins exhibit strong affinities

with products of the mint of Rome, namely Roman-style portraits, Roman die axes (6 o'clock) and an identical replication of designs. Two Roman coin types from 84 CE (*RIC* 2.12, Dom. nos. 207, 209) are closely imitated by issues of Agrippa. One of the designs features a standing figure of the goddess Moneta holding scales and a cornucopia (*RPC* 2 nos. 2265, 2269 = *TJC*, nos. 153, 161) and the other an altar of Salus with panelled doors (*RPC* 2, nos. 2266, 2270 = *TJC*, nos. 154, 162). On the respective reverses of the Agrippa coins, the Latin legends, *MONETA AVGVST/ S C* and *SALVTI AVGVST/ S C* occupy exactly the same spaces in the design that they do on their equivalents from the mint of Rome. The additional legends in Greek that identify these coins with Agrippa II, *EIII BA AΓPI* and *ET-KE* (or *ET-Kς*) ('in the time of King Agrippa, year 25' (or 'year 26'), respectively, are squeezed into available spaces (see [Figures A2.9](#) and [A2.10](#)). Their very close similarity points strongly to either dies or the actual coins being produced in Rome.⁴⁸⁹ Their irregular fabric may mean that the flans were prepared locally and struck in Caesarea Philippi, using dies imported from Rome, although Burnett believes that these coins were actually produced in the Roman capital. There are precedents from the bronze coinage of Cyprus in the Flavian period of dies and perhaps the actual coins being produced in Rome (see *RPC* 2.1, pp. 264–65; *RPC* 2, nos. 1818–26). The years 25 and 26 of Agrippa embossed on these coins must postdate 84 CE, the date of the Roman originals. Only an era of 60/61 CE satisfies this condition, in which case years 25 and 26 correspond to 84/85 and 85/86 CE.

Smaller coins from year 26 (85/86 CE, according to the era of 60/61 CE) also carry Latin inscriptions on their obverses, which bear the profiled head of Domitian (*RPC* 2, nos. 2271–72 = *TJC*, nos. 163–64). Their reverses bear an uncanny resemblance to two coins of different denomination from Rome dated 74 CE; see [Figures A2.11–A2.14](#). They may have been intended for circulation in Syria, but as T. V. Buttrey has shown, were more widely distributed across the Empire.⁴⁹⁰ One of them displays a motif of crossed cornucopias with a caduceus, a type that was especially popular in the Roman east and the other a large 'S C'. The principal difference between the two Agrippa coins and their Roman counterparts is in the relative lack of finesse of the motifs and the omission of the wreath border around the 'S C' on the Agrippa coin.

While Agrippa II seems to have been the first Herodian monarch to employ Roman coin dies, we need to remember that it was his father who was the trail blazer in drawing on the imperial repertoire for his bronzes. The coins that were issued in his name at Caesarea Philippi include imitations of contemporaneous bronze coins minted in Rome, especially those featuring members of the imperial family.⁴⁹¹

However, their inscriptions are in Greek rather than Latin.

Figure A2.9 Agrippa II, year 26. Æ 27 mm, 10.59 g (= As). Laureate bust of Domitian; [IMP] CAES DIVI VESP F DOMITIAN AVG G[ER COS XII] ('Emperor Domitian, son of the deified Vespasian, Germanicus, Consul for the 12th time') / Moneta standing and holding a cornucopia and scales; MONETA AVGVST and S C across the field, incorporating ΕΠΙ ΒΑ ΑΓΠΙ and ΕΤ Κς ('In the time of King Agrippa, year 26'). *RPC* 2, no. 2269 = *TJC*, no. 162. Heritage Signature Auction 3018 (5 Sep. 2012), lot 20100. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, Inc.

Figure A2.10 Agrippa II, year 25. Æ 25 mm, 9.55 g (= As). Laureate head of Domitian with aegis; [IMP CAES] DIVI VESP F DOMITIAN [AVG GER COS X] ('Emperor Domitian, son of the deified Vespasian, Germanicus, Consul for the 10th time') / Altar of Salus.; SALVTI AVGVST ('For the well-being of Augustus'), incorporating ΕΠΙ ΒΑ ΑΓΠ and ΕΤ ΚΕ ('In the time of King Agrippa, year 25'); in exergue, S C. *RPC* 2, no. 2266 = *TJC*, no. 154. CNG Electronic Auction 289 (24 Oct. 2012), lot 255. Courtesy Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

Figure A2.11 Agrippa II, year 26. Æ 20 mm, 5.14 g (= semis). Laureate bust of Domitian ('Emperor Domitian Caesar Augustus, son of the deified Vespasian, Germanicus, Consul for the 12th time') / Crossed cornucopias over winged caduceus; ΕΠΙ ΒΑ ΑΓΠΙ, ΕΤ Κς ('In the time of King Agrippa, year 26'); S C in exergue. *RPC* 2, no. 2271 = *TJC*, no. 163. CNG Electronic Auction 333 (20 Aug. 2014), lot 223. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

Figure A2.12 Vespasian. Orichalcum dupondius (27 mm, 9.63 g). Rome mint. Struck in 74 CE. Laureate bust of Vespasian; IMP CAESAR VESPASIAN AVG ('Emperor Vespasian Augustus Caesar') / Two crossed cornucopias set over winged caduceus; PON MAX TR POT PP COS V CENS (Vespasian's titulature as Consul for the 5th time). *RIC* 2.1², Vesp. no. 757 = *RPC* 2, no. 1983 = McAlee 2007, no. 369. CNG Auction 53 (15 Mar. 2000), lot 1493. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

In itself, the use of Latin on some of the coins of Agrippa II (and others attributed to Roman governors of Judaea) is not unusual for the same phenomenon is observed elsewhere in Syria, where only a miniscule proportion of the population was conversant in Latin and

yet coins were issued there bearing Latin inscriptions.⁴⁹² Besides the coins with Latin inscriptions issued by Roman *coloniae* in the eastern Mediterranean, Latin also appears on the bronze coins of the Syrian capital, Antioch, a bastion of Hellenic culture in the Levant, from the reign of Augustus with the appearance of the ‘S C bronzes’ commencing in the final years of the 1st century BCE (*RPC* 1, nos. 4100–107). The bronze coins of Antioch (but not those of silver) continued to feature Latin inscriptions, sometimes alongside Greek ones, together with the emperor’s portrait through the 1st century CE (*RPC* 1, nos. 4247–49, 4272–73, 4276–85, etc.).

Figure A2.13 Agrippa II, year 26. Æ 19 mm, 5.17 g (= semis). Laureate bust of Domitian; IMP CA D VES F DOM AVG GER COS XII (‘Emperor Domitian with his titulature as Consul for the 12th time’) / Large S•C; ΕΠΙ ΒΑ ΑΓΡΠΙ, ΕΤ Κς (‘In the time of King Agrippa, year 26’). *RPC* 2, no. 2272 = *TJC*, no. 164. Roma Numismatics Auction 13 (23 Mar. 2017), lot 456. Courtesy of Roma Numismatics Ltd.

Figure A2.14 Vespasian. Orichalcum as (21 mm, 5.93 g). Rome mint. Struck in 74 CE. Laureate bust of Vespasian; IMP CAESAR VESP AVG (‘Emperor Vespasian Caesar Augustus’) / Large S•C within a laurel wreath. *RIC* 2.12, Vesp. no. 1565 = *RPC* 2, no. 1984 = McAlee 2007, no. 370. Roma E-Sale 16 (28 Feb. 2015), lot 358. Courtesy of Roma Numismatics Ltd.

A2.4 A metrological analysis of Agrippa II’s coinage

The authors of *RPC* 2 contend that ‘the specific value of each denomination [of Agrippa II’s coins] is difficult to determine’, although they discern two systems, one for the ‘Latin’ coins and another for the rest.⁴⁹³ It is possible to determine that, in fact, one system was used by using straightforward statistical analysis. In fact, it has been possible to establish the currency system of Agrippa’s coinage and its constituent denominations by applying the analysis to the metrological data provided in *RPC*.⁴⁹⁴ The principal findings are:

1. The currency system is essentially that established in the Seleucid kingdom after the reform of Alexander I Balas (c. 150–45 BCE), and adopted by Hasmonaean rulers of Judaea and their successors, as noted by this author.⁴⁹⁵
2. Seven different denominations have been identified, which are

consistent with that system.

Table A2.3 lists the respective average weight of each coin type and the corresponding *RPC* catalogue number in year order. The number of specimens involved in the weight determination is shown in brackets. As already mentioned, coin *RPC* 2, no. 2242 = *TJC*, no. 134, minted in Tiberias as stated on this issue, is listed separately from the rest of the coins of year 15 and indicated with an asterisk. The three exceptionally large issues of years 26 and 27, *RPC Suppl.* 1–3, no. S3-II-2272A, *RPC* 2, nos. 2282 (= *TJC* no. 167) and 2284 (= *TJC*, no. 168), are not included in the table and will be discussed separately. In this table, coins of similar weight are grouped together in columns and their respective numbers, size ranges, average weights and standard deviations are shown in Table A2.4. For comparison, the equivalent data for Seleucid coins from the mid-2nd century onwards is provided alongside.

It is seen from Tables A2.4 and A2.5 that the coins reasonably conform to discrete multiples of a unit, which can be readily recognised as the unit of currency of later Seleucid coinage, which has been identified as the hemichalkon denomination.⁴⁹⁶ Moreover, the commonly encountered multiples of the Seleucid unit (2, 4 and 8) are replicated in the coinage of Agrippa II, with additional multiples 3, 6 and 10. The decimal denomination (10 units) may reflect influence from Roman metrology (e.g. 1 aureus = 100 sesterii). The issuing of ternary multiples (3 and 6), which are not encountered in Seleucid coinage, may have been prompted by the desire to include denominations that equate to Roman semisses and asses, and thereby connect the coinage of Agrippa II with the Roman system so as to achieve a readily convertible currency. In this regard, it is interesting to note that the ternary multiples of the unit of Agrippa's years 25 and 26 are the 'Latin' coins (*RPC* 2, nos. 2265–66, 2269–72 = *TJC*, nos. 153–54, 161–64).⁴⁹⁷

Table A2.3 The coin issues of Agrippa II, as catalogued in *RPC*, classified into different denominations and according to the year dates marked, which may not belong to a single chronology, as explained in Section A2.1

Note: The asterisk indicates Tiberias as the mint; all the other coins are assumed to have been minted at Caesarea Philippi.

Table A2.4 Average size ranges and weights with their standard deviation for the denominations of Agrippa II's coins, showing their correlation with the Seleucid currency system as specified in the table on p. 52 of SC 2.2

Table A2.5 Average coin weights of the denominations of Agrippa II's coins and their deviations from the trend-line

Just as the same coin denomination could be produced in substantially different sizes, as noted above, a corollary is that there is

a large overlap between the coin sizes (diameters) of the different denominations of Agrippa II's coins, and there is even a significant range in weight for a given denomination as can be seen from the size of the standard deviations in [Tables A2.4](#) and [A2.5](#). The same happens to be true also of Seleucid bronze coins catalogued in SC.

The resolution of Agrippa's coinage to integral numbers of currency units is well illustrated when the average weights are represented graphically as in [Graph A2.1](#) and a regression analysis carried out. In this case, the Neronian and Flavian issues are plotted and analysed separately. Trend-lines have been added for both sets of data. The slopes of the respective trend-lines are extremely close to one another, although slightly offset, indicating that the Neronian issues were slightly heavier than the same denominations issued under the Flavian emperors.

Graph A2.1 Average weights of Agrippa II's coins as a function of their denomination, with separate trend-lines shown for his Neronian and Flavian issues.

The quality of the fit of the data is demonstrated by two quantitative measures, the coefficient of determination R^2 of the trend-line and the deviation of the data points from that line. For the coins of Agrippa II issued under the Flavian emperors, $R^2 = 0.998$ (i.e. very close to 1) and, as can be seen from [Table A2.5](#), the deviation from the trend-line is well within the standard deviation for all but one of the data points, that corresponding to one unit of currency, the (Seleucid) hemichalkon. This rather minor discrepancy might be due to the higher attrition of the smaller coin, with its higher surface-to-volume ratio, through wear and corrosion.

For the coins of Agrippa issued under Nero, $R^2 = 0.984$. The slightly reduced size of the correlation factor, in this case, is consistent with the smaller sample size of these coins and also the fewer data points, or different denominations (here 3, compared with 7 for the Neronian issues) that were available.

Finally, consideration needs to be given to the three largest bronze pieces of Agrippa II, which were not included in the above analysis, namely *RPC Suppl.* 1–3, no. S3-II-2272A (= Hendin 2009) and *RPC* 2, nos. 2282, 2284 (= *TJC*, nos. 167–68). These are all very rare issues, the first, a unique example weighing 28.66 g, dating from year 26 and the other two from the year 27 of Agrippa's era of 60/61 CE, that is, 85/86 and 86/87 CE. The respective average weights of the latter two (as given in *RPC*) are 25.99 and 21.49 g, based on just four and two examples, respectively. Somewhat different weights are reported elsewhere for these two pieces.⁴⁹⁸ From this limited data, it is only

possible to state that these issues are high multiples (10 and above) of the unit module (hemichalkon) of 2.03 g. To determine such high multiplication factors to any precision requires much larger sample numbers. Another point to be made about these pieces is that their designs differ from those of Agrippa's other issues. One (*RPC* 2 no. 2282 = *TJC* no. 167) features a draped and laureate bust of Vespasian on its obverse while the reverse bears an elaborate representation of Tyche holding a cornucopia and a rudder on a globe; see [Figure A2.15](#). The other two issues mentioned here are more distinctive, displaying confronting heads of Titus and Domitian on the obverse and a lively representation of Pan in fine style on the reverse⁴⁹⁹; see [Figure A2.16](#). There can be little doubt that all three are special issues, perhaps medallions, and not only the unique ultra-large specimen *RPC Suppl.* 1–3, no. S3-II-2272A, as supposed by D. Hendin.⁵⁰⁰ If so, the occasion for their minting remains a mystery.

[Figure A2.15](#) Agrippa II, year 27. Æ 34 mm, 25.21 g. Laureate bust of Vespasian; ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑ ΟΥΕCΠΙΑ[CIANΩ KAICA]ΠΙ CEBACTΩ ('Emperor Vespasian Caesar Augustus') / Tyche wearing a *polos* or *modius* on her head, standing and holding a cornucopia and rudder supported on a globe, with a small star in the upper left field; BACIAEΩC AΓPIΠΠΙΑ ETOYC KZ ('King Agrippa, year 27'). *RPC* 2, no. 2282 = *TJC*, no. 167. Heritage Signature Auction 3003 (8–9 Mar. 2012), lot 20163. Courtesy of Heritage Auctions, Inc.

[Figure A2.16](#) Agrippa, year 27. Æ 31 mm, 21.54 g. Confronting laureate busts of Titus on the right and Domitian on the left; [AY]ΤΟΚΡΑ KAIC[AP TITOC] KAICAP ΔΟΜΙΤΙΑΝΟ[C] ('Emperor Titus Caesar, Domitian Caesar') / Pan, scantily clad in a goatskin and striding left, playing pipes (*syrinx*) held in his right hand, with a *pedum* held over his left shoulder, a tree trunk on his right and a small crescent in the upper left field; BACIAEWC AΓPIΠΠΙΑ [ETO]YC KZ ('King Agrippa, year 27'). *RPC* 2, no. 2284 = *TJC*, no. 168. CNG Triton XIX Auction (4 Jan. 2016), lot 368. Courtesy of Classical Numismatic Group, Inc.

The unique larger bronze piece of this type, Æ 35 mm, 28.66 g (RPC Suppl. 1–3, no. S3-II-2272A), bears the year date ΚϚ = 26.

A2.5 Concluding remarks

1. Agrippa's coin issues vividly demonstrate the process of

Romanisation that was growing apace in his kingdom, especially after the Judaeen-Roman War. This phenomenon is manifested by the increasing use of Roman motifs on his coins, the appearance of Latin in several coin inscriptions and the circulation in Agrippa's kingdom of Roman coins with his name and year dates applied. The inclusion of denominations that convert directly to Roman currency suggests that a process of fiscal integration with Rome was also taking place during the second half of his reign.

2. The extraordinary number of coin issues bearing *Judaea Capta* themes provides clear, concrete evidence that Agrippa II found it imperative to emphasise his wholehearted commitment to Rome and celebration of its victory in the Judaeen-Roman War. In his preference for these coin motifs, Agrippa displayed his complete disavowal of the rebellious Jews and implicit lack of concern about their fate.

459 According to the listings in *RPC*: *RPC* 1 nos. 4988–92, *RPC* 2 nos. 2242–99 and *RPC Suppl.* 1–3, no. S3-II-2272A; cf. *TJC*, nos. 129–82. This reckoning does not include the two enigmatic coins featuring female members of the Roman imperial house (*RPC* 1, nos. 4845–46 = *TJC*, nos. 353–54) that will be discussed below. The numbers of coin types produced by other Herodian rulers in the southern Levant, as classified in *RPC* are: Herod the Great, 11; Herod Archelaus, 6; Herod Antipas, 20; Philip, 16; Agrippa I, 15; making a total of 68. If we include the coins of Herod of Chalcis, a further four coins are added to this number.

460 His father, Agrippa I, occasionally placed his diademed head on his coins minted outside Jerusalem (*RPC* 1, nos. 4974, 4978, 4985–86 = *TJC*, nos. 113, 118, 122, 126). Images of Agrippa II's mother, Cyprus, also appear on her husband's coinage (*RPC* 1, nos. 4975 corr, 4978 = *TJC*, nos. 114, 118). Agrippa I featured his young son, Agrippa II, on two of the coins with profile portraits and a third depicting the young prince on horseback (*RPC* I, nos. 4979, 4987, and 4974 = *TJC*, nos. 119, 123, and 113). However, Kokkinos (1998, 286) has suggested that the boy on horseback was meant to represent Agrippa I's predeceased son Drusus. For a detailed assessment of the coins of Agrippa I, see Burnett 2011/14.

461 *RPC* 1.1, p. 685; *RPC* 2.1, p. 309. Kokkinos 2003, 175.

462 Kokkinos 2003, 174.

463 *RPC* 2.1 p. 309, with Kokkinos 2003, 174–79.

464 *RPC* 2.1, p. 309.; Kushnir-Stein 2002b, 124–28.

465 Burnett 2011, 124.

466 Kushnir-Stein 2002b.

467 *Ibid.*, 124. A 60/61 CE era definitely applies to the coins with Latin inscriptions of years 25 and 26; see [Section A2.3](#).

468 See *BJ* 2.284; Kushnir-Stein 2002b, 127.

469 For other coins of Agrippa II issued under the Flavian emperors that conflict with Kushnir-Stein's chronological scheme, see Kokkinos 2003, 176–77.

470 Kokkinos 2003, 178.

- 471 Hiesinger 1975, 120. The design on the reverse of these three coins, with the five-line Greek inscription bordered by a wreath is strikingly similar to that on the reverse of the two coins issued by the city authorities of Sepphoris dated to 'Year 14 of Nero Claudius Caesar', that is, 67/68 CE; *RPC* 1, nos. 4849–50 = *TJC*, nos. 127–28. These two series of coins were struck at roughly the same time and it is likely that their dies were produced by the same workshop.
- 472 The pose of Agrippina the Younger is exactly the same on the coins of the two Caesareas. The only perceptible difference is that a small crescent is added above the image of Agrippina in the Caesarea Maritima issues. Also, this Roman matron is named in Greek rather than in Latin on these two coins.
- 473 Helpfully, the coins issued in the name of Agrippa I are all dated. There are issues by him for regnal years 2 (37/38 CE) and 5 (40/41 CE) in Caesarea Philippi (*RPC* 1, nos. 4973–80 = *TJC* 112–119), year 6 (41/42 CE) in Jerusalem (*RPC* 1, no. 4981 = *TJC*, no. 120), and years 7 and 8 (42/43 and 43/44 CE) in Caesarea Maritima (*RPC* 1, nos. 4982–87 = *TJC*, nos. 121–26).
- 474 One of the images, showing Nero's deceased daughter, Claudia, standing inside a hexastyle, domed temple raised on a podium with steps is closely similar to a type on one of that emperor's denarii struck in c. 65–66 CE, but, with Vesta within the temple, holding a patera and a long sceptre (*RIC* 12, Ner. no. 62). The degree of similarity between the two images, down to such fine detail as the reticulated roof decoration and acroteria, indicates that those who designed the commemorative coin for Poppaea and Claudia had knowledge of the Vesta type.
- 475 Bennett 2007, 320–21.
- 476 This motif is rather similar to the one on a coin issue of Agrippa II's great uncle, the tetrarch Philip (4–34 CE), commemorating the passing of the Julio-Claudian matriarch, Livia (*RPC* 1, no. 4949 = *TJC*, no. 107 and *RPC Suppl.* 1–3, no. S-4952A = *TJC*, no. 110). A similar type, also showing a hand clasping three grains of corn, appears on a bronze coin of Agrippa I from year 2 of his reign (37/38 CE), and also attributed to Caesarea Philippi (*RPC* 1, no. 4975 = *TJC*, no. 114).
- 477 Kropp 2013, 370.
- 478 For Greek antecedents of Fortuna as *Agathē Tychē*, see Jacobson 2012, 149. The cornucopia first made its appearance as an adjunct in Greek representations of Tyche in the 4th century BCE; see *LIMC* 8.1, sv. 'Tyche', 124 [L. Villard].
- 479 *LIMC* 8.1, sv 'Fortuna', 136 nos. 167–74 [F. Rausa].
- 480 *LIMC* 8.1 sv. 'Victoria' 242–43 nos. 28–35 [R. Vollkommer].
- 481 Jacobson 2013, 132–41.
- 482 Burnett 2012, 11, 13–14.
- 483 Dahmen 2008, 503–504 and n. 57.
- 484 *LIMC* 8.1 sv 'Victoria', 242 no. 29; Ridgway 2001, 89–90.
- 485 *RPC* 1, no. 3646. This motif seems to have resulted from a merging of the Capua/Brescia type of Aphrodite with a representation of a winged Victory inscribing a shield set on a military trophy, such as depicted on a republican quinarius of C. Egnatuleius C. f. of 97 BCE (*RRC*, no. 333/1).
- 486 Jacobson 2000.
- 487 Hendin 2007, 125; Qedar 1989.
- 488 see, for example, Tarbell 1908, etc.
- 489 Burnett 2012, 4, 13; *RPC* 2.1, p. 309.
- 490 Buttrey 2012 and confirmed by McAlee 2010, 9; cf. McAlee 2007, 12, 160–61. The Roman series in question are listed in *RPC* as orichalcum coins struck at Antioch; see *RPC* 2.1, nos. 1982–2005 = McAlee 2007, nos. 368–78, 386–95, 414–18 [74 CE]).

In *RIC* 2.1², the dupondii (*RIC* 2.1², Vesp. nos. 756–64) are differentiated from the lower denominations in the series (*RIC* 2.1², Vesp., nos. 1564–81). Whereas the authors of the revised *RIC* 2.1² believed that the dupondii of this type circulated primarily in the west rather than the east, they classed the smaller coins as being minted in Rome for specific use in Syria (see *RIC* 2.1², pp. 47–48), but this is now known not to be correct and that differentiation is unwarranted. The semis denomination of this series bears a head of the Tyche of Antioch with a mural crown and the Latin legend, ANTIOCHIA. This type, but with the legend in Greek (ANTIOXEΩN), had been used for civic bronzes of the same module under Nero, between 55/56 and 68/69 CE (*RPC* 1, nos. 4286–87, 4290–92, 4299; McAlee 2007, nos. 100–103, 106, 110, 115A). The design of the as in this series, displaying a large S C in a wreath on its reverse, is similar to that of the ‘SC bronzes’ initiated at Antioch under Augustus and continued there for over two centuries (see McAlee 2007, 46–48).

491 Burnett 1987, 27–31; 2012, 11–12.

492 Burnett 2012, 10; 2002, 119–20.

493 *RPC* 2.1, 309. According to Hendin (2010, 284), Agrippa II’s coins comprise ‘four basic denominations – the full unit, half-unit, quarter-unit, and eighth-unit’, although without specifying what the ‘unit’ was meant to represent.

494 Jacobson 2015/16, 66–71.

495 Jacobson 2014b.

496 Jacobson 2017.

497 The authors of *RPC* 2.1 (p. 309) expressly remark that the two denominations of Agrippa II’s ‘Latin’ coins ‘are no doubt asses and semisses’, although they are of the opinion that they conform to a separate system from his other coins.

498 For *RPC* 2, no. 2282 = *TJC* no. 167, a weight of 35.5 g is cited by Y. Meshorer for this coin type, while according to Hendin (2009, 58), its weight falls into the range 30–35 g. With regard to *RPC* 2, no. 2284 = *TJC* no. 168, Hendin (2009, 58 n. 3) quotes values from the literature in the range 19.32–23.32 g.

499 The design of facing heads of Titus and Domitian occurs on coins of Vespasian struck in Rome and elsewhere in bronze, silver and gold in 70–73 CE (*RIC* 2.1², Vesp. nos. 15–16, 37, etc.). The image of Pan seems to be unique for coins of this period, although it bears certain similarities (e.g. pose of the slender male figure) with the frequent representation of Mars on coins of Vespasian struck from 69 CE onwards (*RIC* 2.1², Vesp. nos. 22–23, 39, etc.). Meshorer is no doubt correct to see the portrayal of Pan as a reference to the major cult established at Caesarea Philippi (Paneas), where this coin was minted (*TJC*, p. 113).

500 Hendin 2009.

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